the weekly
Standard

JUNE 1, 2009 $4.95

NEWSWEEK & COURIC & DOWD— OH MY!
ANDREW FERGUSON

REAGAN IN OPPOSITION

The Lessons of 1977
by NOEMIE EMERY

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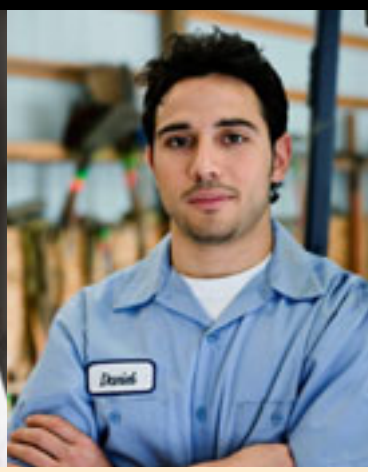

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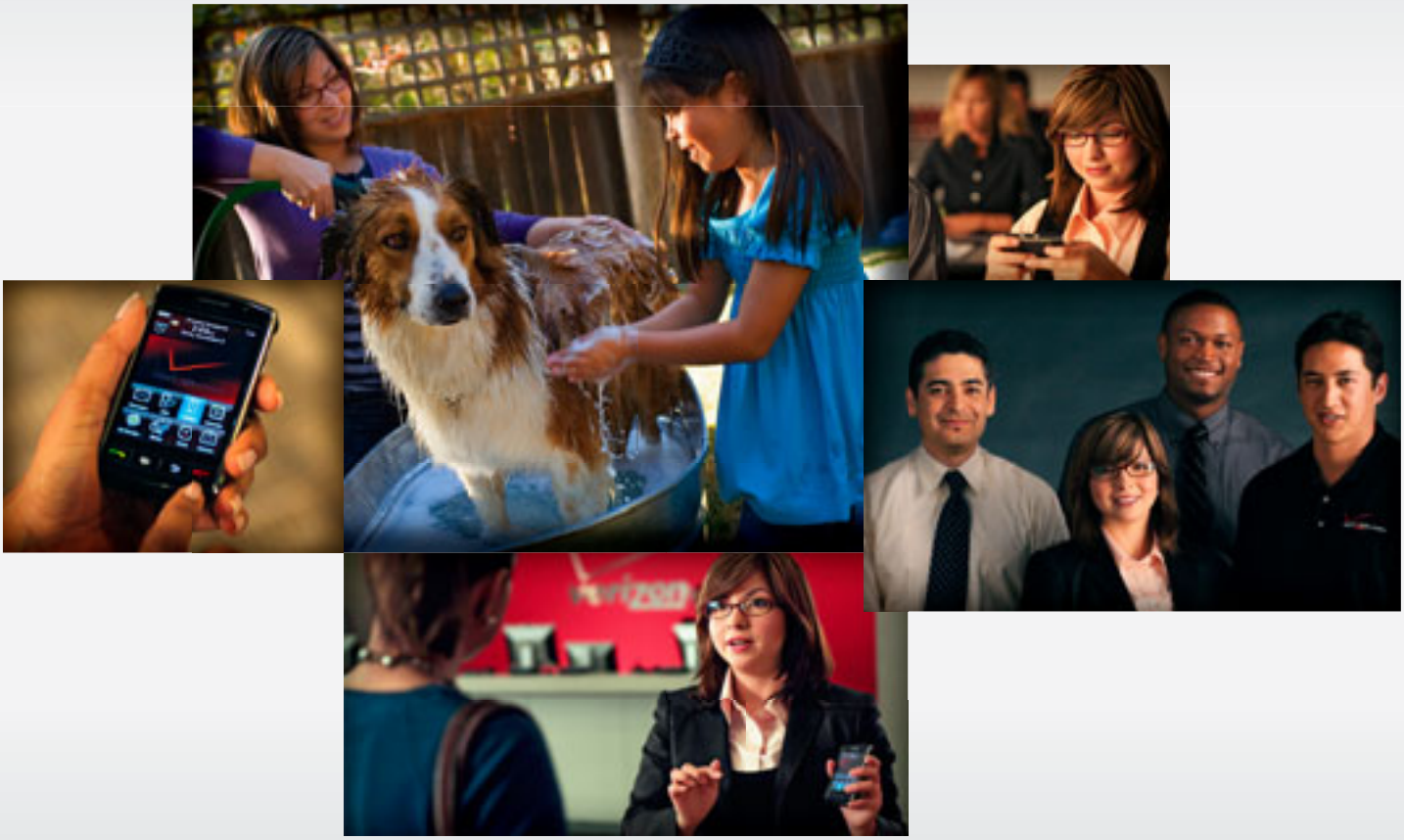

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Save Your Money: Don't Buy This Book

Vying for the title of least sympathetic financial hardship case ever is *New York Times* (economics!) reporter Edmund L. Andrews, whose article "My Personal Credit Crisis" ran in the May 17 *Times* magazine. The piece is an excerpt from his new book *Busted: Life Inside the Great Mortgage Meltdown*.

In between covering global financial meltdowns, Andrews created his own personal financial meltdown. "It was August 2004, just as the mortgage party was getting really good," he relates. "I was 48 years old and eager to start a new chapter in my life with Patricia Barreiro, who was then my fiancée."

High school friends years before, both were on the rebound from failed marriages. Barreiro, with custody of two young children, hadn't worked for 20 years. Andrews was pulling down $120,000 from the *Times* but paying $4,000 a month in alimony and child support. What to do? Cement the relationship by borrowing $460,000 to buy a house in Silver Spring, Md. This at a time when Andrews's pay, minus the aforementioned obligations to his first family, came to $2,777 per month. In an earlier era, as he admits, he could have afforded only to rent a one-bedroom apartment. But in 2004, mortgage lenders were willing to extend him as much as half a million dollars. He went for it.

Having taken such a gamble on rising home prices and Barreiro's unproven earning power, the couple might have settled down to a life of macaroni and cheese, thrift-store clothes, bag lunches, and Scrabble games for cheap family entertainment. But who'd want to buy a book about that kind of life? Okay, you know from the title where this story is going, so here's the good part:

> Patty spent little on herself, but she refused to scrimp on top-quality produce, Starbucks coffee, bottled juices, fresh cheeses and clothing for the children and for me. She regularly bought me new shirts and ties to replace the frayed and drab ones in my closet. She thought it wasn't worth agonizing over nickels and dimes.

Besides being in hock for a house they couldn't afford, they ran up $50,000 in credit card debt:

> In the previous December alone, we charged $2,845 on the Chase card for Christmas gifts, food, gasoline, clothing and other expenses. The charges included almost $350 for groceries, $700 in clothes from J. Crew, $179 at GapKids and $700 for airplane tickets for two of Patty's children to visit their father in Los Angeles. Our balance climbed from $14,118 to $17,135, and in January 2006 we maxed out at our $19,000 credit limit. And there were other expenses on other cards: $1,200 in dental work for Patty's son Ben; $1,600 to rent a beach house the previous year for us and all the children. Granted, the beach house was an embarrassing mistake. . . .

The Scrapbook knows exactly what you are thinking: Thank God "Patty spent little on herself." Imagine if she were the self-indulgent type!

And in case you were wondering, they haven't lost the house yet. Andrews ends the excerpt on this poignant note: "I was actually beginning to feel sorry for Chase. It seemed to be so flooded with defaulting borrowers that it didn't have time to foreclose on my house. Eight months after my last payment to the bank, I am still waiting for the ax to fall."

You're probably also thinking that the *New York Times* should be a little embarrassed that they made this man their chief economics reporter. But that's not all they should be embarrassed about: Despite writing a seemingly revelatory book about his personal finances, he covered up critical details.

For what Paul Harvey would have called "the rest of the story," we must turn to the terrific blog of the *Atlantic*'s Megan McArdle (meganmcardle.theatlantic.com):

> It turns out the story has been tidied up a little. Patty Barreiro, Andrews' wife, has declared bankruptcy twice. The second time was while they were married, a detail that didn't make it into either the book or the excerpt. . . . Andrews' desire to shield his wife is understandable—hell, laudable. No decent person wants to parade their spouse's financial trouble in front of the world. But this is material information that changes the tenor of his story. . . .
>
> In September 1998, California bankruptcy court records indicate that Patty and her first husband declared bankruptcy. The financial statement they filed with the court indicated family income of $174,000 in 1996, $87,000 in 1997, and $126,000 in the first nine months of 1998. The income fluctuations are not surprising, given that her husband was in the film production industry. By the time of the filing, the couple owed about $30,000 on 8 credit cards, over $200,000 in back taxes, and almost $15,000 in private school tuition, as well as substantial car and mortgage payments.
>
> [The bankruptcy code requires filers to wait 8 years after a previous Chapter 7 discharge.] In 2007, nearly as soon as she was eligible, Patty Barreiro filed again in Montgomery County. . . . Serial bankruptcies can, of course, happen to anyone with enough bad luck. But . . . bad luck isn't really the picture painted by either filing. Rather, Ms. Barreiro seems to have spent most of the last two decades living right up to the edge of her income, and beyond, and then massively defaulting. . . .
>
> Andrews has been admirably open about many of the poor decisions and

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the wishful thinking that led him deep into debt. Nonetheless, he has laid much of the blame onto irresponsible bankers and mortgage brokers. . . . It's hard to argue that Ms. Barreiro was forced into bankruptcy by crazed subprime mortgage lenders in 1998. Greedy bankers certainly didn't keep her and her first husband from paying their taxes. . . . Those kinds of problems can't be fixed with tighter mortgage lending standards or a 500 basis point uptick in the Fed Funds rate. And they aren't the main problems facing most Americans today. ♦

State Department ♥ Obama

Our friend Yuval Levin notes on *National Review Online*: "The State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs, in an effort, one presumes, to shape America's image abroad, has put out a book of President Obama's speeches, to be read the world over. Of course, President Obama has only been president a few months, and putting out such a book takes a few months, so there is actually only one speech in the book that he delivered after becoming president: It is his inaugural address, which the State Department entitles: 'The Remaking of America.'

"Other speeches in the book are mostly from the presidential campaign: from his announcement speech (entitled 'Our Past, Future & Vision for America' in the book) to his election night speech (entitled 'Change Has Come to America'). There are also excerpts from his 2004 Democratic convention speech and, most amazing of all, from his 2002 speech against the Iraq war.

"In its excerpts from that 2002 speech, the State Department has chosen one quotation in particular to feature. . . . It reads, in huge letters: 'What I am opposed to is a dumb war. A rash war. A war based not on reason but on passion, not on principle but on politics.'

"This is the image of America that our new president and his Department of State apparently want to project around the world: a nation in need of remaking; a nation begging for change; a nation that engages in dumb, rash wars; but a nation led by Barack Obama, who recognizes all this, and therefore maybe not that bad a nation after all.

"They're bound to love us now." ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

"'He's the first president in modern history who's a serious student of constitutional law,' said political analyst Charlie Cook, editor of the nonpartisan *Cook Political Report* in Washington. 'This is something the guy's got a passion for. Nobody has to explain to him the significance of a Supreme Court appointment.' . . . " [*What? They had to explain that to Reagan, the Bushes, and Clinton? Who knew?*] ("Obama Court Decision Shaped by Years, Wife's Advice," *Bloomberg*, May 7.) ♦

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Casual

Our Sunday Worst

The best seats at a boxing match, dog show, or Broadway play are the worst seats at Mass. I'm still not sure why, but almost everyone knows it. As an altar boy I used to notice that even at a 7 a.m. weekday Mass with only two people in attendance, the first eight pews would still be empty. If Mass were said in the front seat of a sedan, most people—my wife and me included—would try to sit in the trunk.

But this Sunday we were running late. In the car, we invoked the usual excuse—that lateness is inevitable when you're herding three small children—and took comfort in the knowledge that we do our best, usually arriving early, even if only just before the last-minute rush.

Arriving early is actually something we do advisedly, because every minute at church is 60 seconds off the clock for how long we can go on being there at all. There is no scientifically documented length of time a family with small children can stay at Mass before a father's arms, which have been wrestling with the one-year-old since the beginning of the Liturgy of the Word, must fall off like termite-ridden tree limbs in a windstorm. Or before a mother's rage, on hold since the earlier struggle at home over whether the five-year-old has to wear those tights, explodes in a bout of raving, howling fury. Or before a toddler jumps onto a nearby parishioner's lap to play with her tropical-fish earrings. But it is as obvious as a smelly diaper that a barely contained chaos is lurking within you, your spouse, and your lovingly dressed offspring—and about all you can do is remain mindful of the fact.

There are those who say the chaos cannot be contained. At our church, they and their children take up positions in a long noisy corridor at the back. The corridor is separated from the church proper by a wall of glass, so these parishioners and their wailing, toy-throwing, relay-racing children can watch the Mass. They can also listen to it, because the priests and readers are miked into a sound system that carries to the corridor. But for me, standing in the corridor is like barely being at church in the first place.

MATT COLLINS

So when, on the Sunday in question, we came in late, there was only the briefest preamble in the corridor before Cynthia and I agreed we'd either find some seats or, God forgive us, leave. Through the glass we spotted a short row completely open. It was, of course, way up front.

We might have taken a pass and headed to the bakery for muffins and the paper, but it was Lent and it would have been sinfully picky to leave simply because the only seating available was too close to the altar. So at the next opportunity we walked in, carrying one child and dragging two others.

Arriving we realized the altar was only about ten feet away, without so much as a kneeler separating us from it. And, positioned as we were to the side, we soon became aware that our faces and every move were now visible to about four-fifths of the congregation.

Immediately our three-year-old son gave me a great smile, openly amazed that we could get this close to the action. Then, in plain view of everyone, he began walking with a silly high kick toward the altar, ready to join the priest, greet the altar boys, and, who knows, deliver the homily if necessary. With his little brother in one arm I reached out and, like a first baseman scooping an errant throw from third, elongated myself by sheer force of will to grab him by the collar and make the necessary play.

It seemed like the whole church was waiting for us to signal when to stand, kneel, sit, and chime in with the correct choral-like response. Usually at Mass one just gives in to the group mind of words and gestures, so even if you lose your place, you're doing the right thing at the right moment. But up front you have no one's cue to follow.

When the basket came around for the collection, we were first to receive the handoff and had exactly 1.2 seconds to produce a contribution as hundreds of faces again turned innocently in our direction. Unable to locate the check we had written in the car, I gave the usher a dumb look and handed him back the empty basket.

After communion we bolted. Though nothing terrible had actually happened, we felt as if we had just been marched naked through the town square. It was several minutes in the car before we could even mention in civil tones how we are never, ever going to do that again.

David Skinner

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Jefferson and Hemings

Noemie Emery's April 27 review of two books on Thomas Jefferson ("Jefferson Revised: Was the architect of liberty our first limousine liberal?") is politically correct tripe. During 2000 and 2001, more than a dozen senior scholars—most of them authors of books on sale at Monticello—carefully examined all evidence that Thomas Jefferson had a sexual relationship with Sally Hemings. They concluded with but a single very mild dissent that the story is false.

Emery notes that both books "rest their case on three things," starting with the Monticello house. In fact Jefferson's bedroom was not isolated, the louvered verandas were not yet installed, no "hidden staircases" existed, and no evidence shows Sally Hemings ever lived in the house. Second is a physical resemblance between some Monticello slaves and Jefferson, but that story deeply involves the Thomas Woodson family oral tradition, disproven in the famous 1998 DNA tests. Third is that Sally and her children received "special treatment" and were freed in Jefferson's will. Surviving records suggest Sally was treated exactly like all her sisters. Her sons received by far the worst treatment of the freed slaves, and Sally herself was never freed by Jefferson.

Though Hollywood has portrayed Sally Hemings as a talented beauty who danced across Paris, Abigail Adams remarked that when Sally arrived in Europe at age 13 or 14 as Jefferson's 8-year-old daughter Maria's servant, she needed even more care than Maria. No evidence suggests Sally lived in the same building as Jefferson in Paris, but strong evidence suggests she lived in servants' quarters at Jefferson's daughter's school.

It is true that DNA established that one of more than two dozen Jefferson males in Virginia fathered Eston Hemings, Sally's youngest child. But the most likely candidate was Jefferson's much younger brother Randolph, who is documented to have likely been at Monticello when the child was conceived, and who a slave reported played his fiddle and danced "half the night" with Monticello slaves. Hemings family tradition claimed Eston was the child of a Jefferson family uncle. Randolph was known at Monticello as "Uncle Randolph."

Trying to destroy Jefferson's reputation has become a cottage industry. Jefferson was imperfect, but with civilization struggling, his legacy stands as the antithesis of the views of Osama bin Laden. As George Will has observed, Jefferson gave America its creed. No Founding Father did more to oppose the evils of human bondage. Thomas Jefferson deserves our gratitude and respect.

Robert F. Turner
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

A Palestinian Gandhi

Gershom Gorenberg fully acknowledges that the lack of Palestinian peacemakers and peaceful activists is a fantasy, but he fails to understand why he, and others like him, continue to believe in it ("The Missing Mahatma," April 6). The Palestinian Arabs have no Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. or other peaceful leaders because they do not, in fact, want peace. After years of ingesting hate-filled propaganda from the PLO, Hamas, and their cheerleaders in the Arab world, the Palestinian people have come to believe that the root of all their problems is the Jewish state next door. Too many people in the West continue to believe that if only Israel could make one more magic compromise, peace would bloom in Palestine. Nothing in recent history suggests this is true. If the Palestinian Arabs really wanted peace, their actions—including their choice of leaders—would reflect that.

James Gilkey
Kernersville, N.C.

Gershom Gorenberg's provocative article meditates on why a leader like Mohandas Gandhi has not emerged to help the Palestinians attain their goals by peaceful means. But had Gandhi's objective been to drive the British from their own homeland, he would assuredly have been neither pacifist nor Mahatma.

Mitchell Rapoport
Wilton, Conn.

Correction

In "Waiting for Dough," (May 11), Christopher Caldwell attributed to KPS Capital Partners (which now owns much of the Waterford crystal business) the announcement last winter that Waterford's flagship crystal plant in Kilbarry, Ireland, would close. The plant closing was announced by Waterford plc in October 2008 and carried out, on January 5, 2009, by Deloitte, in its capacity as receiver for the Waterford Wedgwood assets. Deloitte signed a letter of intent with KPS on January 8. The deal was finalized in March. The article states that much of Waterford's production will continue in the Czech Republic. That should have read Slovakia.

• • •

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But Enough About Me…

Barack Obama spoke at the National Archives last Thursday on the war on terror (not that he used that term). After paying tribute to the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, and before turning to a defense of his policies, the President of the United States said:

> I stand here today as someone whose own life was made possible by these documents. My father came to our shores in search of the promise that they offered. My mother made me rise before dawn to learn of their truth when I lived as a child in a foreign land. My own American journey was paved by generations of citizens who gave meaning to those simple words—"to form a more perfect union." I have studied the Constitution as a student; I have taught it as a teacher; I have been bound by it as a lawyer and legislator. I took an oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution as Commander-in-Chief, and as a citizen, I know that we must never—ever—turn our back on its enduring principles for expedience sake.

Who cares? Who cares about Barack Obama's father, his mother, or his "own American journey"? Is his journey so noteworthy that it needs to be intruded into a presidential speech on weighty matters of constitutional law and public policy, of civil liberties and national security? After all, tens of millions of other Americans have ancestors who came to these shores in search of the promise of a better life. Tens of millions of other Americans have lived in a foreign land—and some of them were presumably awakened early by their mothers.

And so what? Are those Americans who didn't live abroad as youths any less attached to the principles of the Declaration? Didn't the rest of us study the Constitution as well? Haven't millions of other Americans also been bound by it as lawyers and legislators—to say nothing of tens of millions who have sworn oaths to it when serving in the military and other public and civic roles?

And isn't the point of the Declaration and the Constitution—and of the various oaths we swear, the pledges of allegiance we make—that our individual backgrounds should recede as we assume the duties of public office or when we exercise our rights as citizens? Perhaps not in the eyes of Barack Obama. Even by the standard of political types, he seems strikingly self-preoccupied and self-referential.

Doesn't Obama's self-regard sometimes seem greater than his regard for the position he occupies? Does he understand that the office of the presidency is bigger—much bigger—than he is? Or does Obama think of the presidency primarily as a vessel through which to exercise his political gifts and pursue his personal achievements?

In an interview for Richard Wolffe's new book, *Renegade: The Making of a President*, Obama told the *Newsweek* reporter he wants to hold a "Muslim summit."

> If I had a Muslim summit, I think that I can speak credibly to them about the fact that I respect their culture, that I understand their religion, that I have lived in a Muslim country, and as a consequence I know it is possible to reconcile Islam with modernity and respect for human rights and a rejection of violence. And I think I can speak with added credibility.

Leave aside the foreign policy naïveté in this comment—the notion that foreign leaders will adjust their policy aims because of where in the world the president of the United States happened to live when he was in grade school. Consider what it says about Obama's self-understanding. The implication of his comment is that American leaders don't routinely respect others' culture or understand their religion. That is Obama's special gift. And to speak to foreign leaders merely with the credibility and authority inherent in being president of the United States isn't good enough. Does Obama grasp that his task is to advance U.S. interests in a lasting way, not his own personal approval rating in the world? As we saw on his earlier apology tour through Europe and his attendance at the Summit of the Americas, the attempt to advance his own standing can come at the expense of standing up for the nation he represents.

Politicians are of course allowed to allude to—even to make a big deal of—their personal qualities. As a candidate, Abraham Lincoln exploited his youth in a humble log cabin. But as president, he rarely dwelled on his personal background. When he did, it was to an opposite effect from Obama. When Lincoln told the soldiers of the 166th Ohio Regiment that "I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has," it was to emphasize that "I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House."

Barack Obama happens temporarily to occupy the White House. He is entitled to pride in his own achievement and confidence in his own abilities. But it would be good if he showed that he understood that he is now president of the United States first, and Barack Obama, admirer of his own journey, second.

—*William Kristol*

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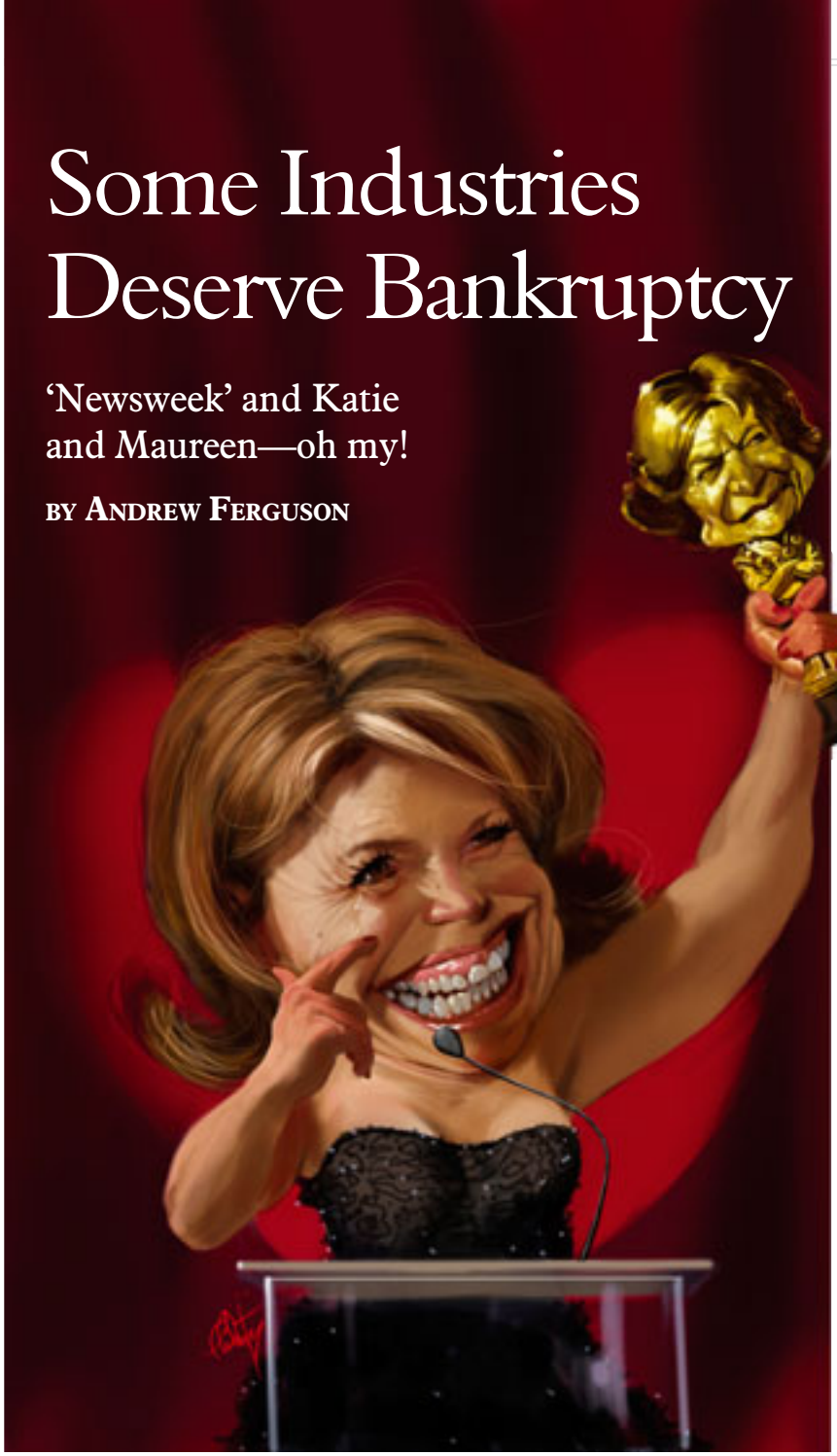
Some Industries Deserve Bankruptcy

'Newsweek' and Katie and Maureen—oh my!

BY ANDREW FERGUSON



THOMAS FLUHARTY

I looked for them—looked hard—but I don't think Jon Meacham or Maureen Dowd made it to the gala dinner last week where Helen Thomas gave Katie Couric the Helen Thomas Award for Excellence in Journalism. They should have been there. Everybody else was, it seemed. And we deserved a gala. Everybody'd had a rough week.

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The rough week began when Jon, who as everybody knows is editor of *Newsweek*, unveiled a redesigned version of his magazine, one of the two newsweeklies that everybody pretends to read. Everybody is crazy about Jon or at least is hoping not to get fired by him. I don't think I'm exaggerating when I say that everybody has his favorite "Meachamism," a word I just made up to describe a statement so comically banal or transparently untrue that only a man whom everybody is crazy about or hopes not to get fired by would try to put it into print. My own favorite Meachamism is rather obscure. It pops up in a book that nobody has read, even though it's about a president, George H.W. Bush, that everybody pretended to kind of admire once we got a good look at his son. The book is called *My Father, My President*, by Doro Bush. On page 218, Doro prints this quotation from Jon: "An important thing to remember about the press is there is no ideological bias."

That's Jon! Jon remembers another important thing about the press. If you assert something and keep asserting it, and if you've clawed your way to a certain level of professional eminence, everybody will agree that what you said is true just by virtue of its having been asserted by you. Last week, when Jon unveiled his new magazine, he wrote in the editor's note that the new *Newsweek* would abandon hard news for opinion essays, featuring "provocative (but not partisan) arguments and unique voices." Then he unrolled his list of contributors. As it happens, they were not provocative (but all Democrats) and not unique, ranging from old newsmagazine writers who are squishy liberals to slightly younger newsmagazine writers who are squishy liberals. (Plus George F. Will.) Then Jon offered another wonderful Meachamism in his own lead essay about President Obama.

"As he turned to make the walk back to Air Force One," Jon wrote, "a breeze blew—and everybody scurried anew, to keep up with him. It was that kind of day—and it has been that kind of presidency: Barack Obama, moving as he wishes to move, and the world bending itself to him."

You could just imagine everybody reading this if anybody read *Newsweek*. They would admire the rich, fecund gorgeousness of Jon's prose—*a breeze blew / scurried anew*—and nod and tap their lower lips with their index fingers, because while everybody will say that Jon's point is true,

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it isn't. What Jon wrote, in fact, is the direct opposite of the truth. Even as the sentence was being written, the president was violating several campaign promises for the simple reason that he has had to bend himself to the world, as presidents usually do. And a good thing, too.

It was that kind of week: While flipping the pages of the new *Newsweek*, it began to occur to everybody that, hey, this is a pretty stupid idea for a magazine. Are there really 1.5 million magazine readers—the number of subscribers Jon has promised advertisers—who want a liberal opinion magazine written by liberals who don't want to admit they're liberals? Last week everybody looked at one another and pondered a world without *Newsweek*.

Monday wasn't even over yet before everybody found out that Maureen Dowd, who as everyone knows writes a column for the *New York Times*, had lifted a paragraph from a popular blog and put it into her column and passed it off as her own work. Everybody loves Maureen. She's everybody's favorite. More important, everybody wants to be Maureen's favorite. So everybody pretended this didn't happen. Instead everybody believed Maureen when she said she'd been "talking to a friend of mine" who made a point in a "cogent—and I assumed spontaneous—way and I wanted to weave the idea into my column." That's why it was woven word for word in her copy.

Her explanation was implausible in every particular, compounding her original offense. Normally everybody loves it when this happens, because everybody gets to say to one another, "In Washington the cover up is often worse than the crime!" *But this was Maureen*. The unthinkable began to emerge as the implausibility sunk in. Everybody's favorite was not only lazy and unimaginative but dishonest too—a bit of a fraud. Just in time the "media critic" for the *Washington Post* stepped in to deliver summary judgment. Maureen, he announced, had made an "inadvertent mistake." Relieved, everybody went back to loving Maureen and wanting to be loved by her.

Well, not everybody. A columnist in Chicago, for example, said Maureen's appropriation of other people's work should be considered a "big deal." This fellow cited the old journalistic rule that you're supposed to write the stuff that you publish under your own name. But, really: *Chicago*? Nobody lives in Chicago.

You can see why everybody welcomed the awards dinner for Katie, whom everybody loves. Really. It was a chance to kick back, relax—a little "me time" for everybody. Katie, as everybody knows, is the newsreader on the *CBS Evening News*. The evening was sponsored by Microsoft, Northrop Grumman, and CBS. Like Maureen, Katie is no stranger to awards. Two months ago she received the Walter Cronkite Award for Special Achievement in Journalism, named after the famous CBS newsreader. A couple weeks before that she won the Edward R. Murrow Award for Best Newscast, named after the other famous CBS newsreader. She moves from triumph to triumph.

At the dinner she was toasted and "roasted" by Jeff Greenfield, the CBS political analyst, and Rick Kaplan, the CBS executive, and David Martin, the CBS correspondent, and some others that everybody would know, including Nicolle Wallace, a former CBS employee. Everybody loves Nicolle. After working for Katie, she got a job preparing Sarah Palin for media interviews during last year's presidential campaign. She prepared Palin for her interview with Katie, in fact. The interview aired on CBS and confirmed everybody's assumption that Palin is a moron. At the awards dinner everybody had a good laugh about that. It really is a small world.

Rick Kaplan, in his roast, said it was a privilege to work for Katie. Nicolle said Katie was an inspiration to young people everywhere. Martin said she was a great reporter. It was Greenfield's opinion that she has not only brains but guts. Then Helen Thomas was hoisted to the podium to present her award to Katie. Everybody admires Helen, though nobody can tell you why. Helen mentioned the Palin interview too. She said Katie's skewering of Palin had ensured that John McCain would lose the election to Barack Obama. You know how everybody feels about Barack Obama—he's the guy the world bends itself to.

"Katie had the right stuff to do that game-changing interview," Helen said. "After that, the ballgame was over."

Helen gave a dramatic pause, then said: "She saved the country."

Helen got a standing ovation, from everybody. ♦

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Manifesto for Banana Republicans

Welcome to the Third World.

BY P.J. O'ROURKE

The other day a journalist friend of mine in Washington got a phone call from a colleague in South America. "How's it feel to be a fellow citizen of the Third World?" my friend's friend asked.

"What?" said my friend.

"You know," said the Latin reporter, "the new government gets in office, the old government goes to jail."

The caller was referring, of course, to the prosecution—or threatened prosecution or mooted prosecution or proposal for prosecution to be publicly disavowed but tacitly permitted to go forward—of six Bush administration officials involved with the legal issues concerning "enhanced interrogation techniques."

Note that Attorney General Eric Holder and assorted Obama allies and ilk have been picking on people of whom you've mostly never heard. Aside from former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, it is unknown notables who are suffering besmirchment, sabotage, shredding, and wreckage of their characters, careers, reputations, and personal lives. John Yoo was a lawyer at the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel. Jay Bybee was in charge of that office. Douglas Feith was an undersecretary of defense. William Haynes was the Defense Department's general counsel. And David Addington was the vice president's chief of staff.

The targets of calumny do not include any people who actually employed enhanced interrogation techniques. No CIA agents or agency contractors are on the black list. Of course not. It's beneath the dignity of Dianne Feinstein to have to get down on her knees every morning and look under her Prius to see if there's an IED from The Firm.

Nor has there been proscription of the political leaders who decreed how Guantánamo miscreants and associate miscreants were to be questioned. George W. Bush and Dick Cheney aren't threatened with legal action, not even by lunatic Iberian jurist Balthasar Garzón. (I received a post-cocktail hour email from a redneck pal: "Hope Don Greaser tries to serve the subpoenas in person. Body mount of Spanish judge in full plumage sure would dress up my game room.") Indicting the top members of the ousted Republican government would attract attention from the wrong people—regular people. Public opinion-makers are vehement in their fastidiously ethical support of the Democratic party's stand on anti-cruelty to terrorists. Public opinion is not so certain. Broad polling might uncover opinions to the effect of, "*Water*-boarding? What's with *water*-boarding. How about *kerosene*-boarding!"

The Democrats know—as they knew during Iran-contra and the Valerie Plame kerfuffle—that it's best to steer clear of both the chiefs and the Indians and hang obscure go-betweens. (Or, as is the American way, crush them to death beneath legal bills.)

Do Democrats really have a conscience about torture? They've been loud enough with their protests when Nancy Pelosi is tortured in the press. But to judge by the nasty sneak of a lying, conniving, mendacious piece of powergrubbing vote trash that is the speaker of the House of Representatives, the Democrats are no more virtuous than the rest of us.

Torture is an evil thing. There are, however, many tortured people in the world outside Guantánamo Bay. (Some are right outside, in Cuba.) These people are innocent of any wrongdoing or suspicion of wrongdoing or knowledge of wrongdoers or even of capacity to do wrong. Infants, the aged, the infirm are tormented, racked, and scourged from Sri Lanka to Belarus, from Harare to Port-au-Prince. Thanks to perversion of political power and idiocy of collectivist thinking a full billion of the world's people are living on less than $1 a day. Plaintively asking if there's any food is an enhanced interrogative indeed. Mistreatment of al Qaeda members and their friends and hangers-on is something I number among my moral concerns. But it's number 1,000,000,001.

The Democrats aren't raising the torture issue because they want to make the United States into a better place. They're raising the torture issue because they want to make the United States into Venezuela del Norte. The leaders of the Democratic party yearn to be like Hugo Chávez or Manuel Noriega, and, frankly, they've got the looks for it.

I don't mind America becoming a Third World country. The weather is better in the Third World than it is where I live in New Hampshire. And household help will be much cheaper. Does Carl Levin do windows? At my hacienda he won't have much choice. The troubled economy will soon be a thing of the past. Once we've got Third World-style full-blown business and government corruption, there won't be an economy. There will be, however, plenty of money after Beijing hauls away all our coal, oil, uranium, bourbon, and other natural resources that China lacks. Best of all, the GOP has a serious incentive to rebuild itself as a party and score some victories at the ballot box. Nothing motivates like "Win or Die."

And we will win. The Republi-

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cans will be back like Danny Ortega is back in Nicaragua—because this is the Third World. When we return to power I'm sure you Democrats will understand our having a little fun of the enhanced interrogation kind with some midlevel members of the Obama administration. (The ex-president himself and Michelle and the kids will be pleasantly ensconced in Cap d'Antibes, as befits a Third World former head of state.) On a sad note, there'll be no last cigarette as the blindfold is put in place. The political rule of developing nations is *plus ça change* . . . so we'll leave many Democratic programs in place—fastidiously ethical anti-tobacco legislation for example. It will be a smoke-free firing squad.

Now to pick our first victim of 2012. (Sooner, if Attorney General Holder orders the Guantánamo detainees to be tried in the District of Columbia night court and they get less time than Marion Barry.) I say Rahm Emanuel. Not just because he isn't important and nobody likes him, but because he's the flunky in the Obama White House who's already chosen his famous last words: *Never let a crisis go to waste*. ♦

An Overleveraged Presidency

Barack Obama's risky initiatives.

BY FRED BARNES

Like a troubled bank, President Obama is overleveraged. When a bank makes risky loans and many of them default, the bank goes bankrupt (or gets bailed out). When a first-term president adopts risky policies and many of them fail, his prospects for sustained public approval and reelection diminish.

One of Obama's policies—the decision to close the Guantánamo prison within a year—has already gotten him in a jam. He has no plan for relocating most of the 241 detainees, and Congress refuses to fund the shutdown until he produces one. Both Congress and the public oppose transferring the prisoners to jails on American soil.

The president's distress was reflected last week in a speech in which he blamed the Bush administration for what he called the Guantánamo "mess." He said captured terrorists should never have been sent to Guantánamo, but he offered no alternative of what should have been done with them. Obama also denounced Bush officials for using tough interrogation tactics such as waterboarding to get information from terrorists. But a new poll by Whit Ayres for Resurgent Republic found a majority of Americans disagree with Obama and believe the tactics were justified.

So Obama, like a banker who made a bad loan, is confronted with a problem of his own making. The president said Bush acted too hastily in setting up Guantánamo. But Obama's announcement, two days after his inauguration, of a deadline for closing Guantánamo was a rash decision made in even greater haste.

Most presidents propose two or three risky policies in their first year—risky because there's a significant chance of failure to deliver what's promised. In 1981, President Reagan's policies of deep cuts in taxes and spending and aggressively confronting the Soviet Union were dicey. But the economy rebounded 18 months later and the Soviets buckled, though not until Reagan's second term.

Obama has outdone Reagan or any president since Lyndon Johnson, perhaps even since FDR, in risk-taking. He's adopted or proposed eight or nine risky policies (by my count). Re-election doesn't require all of them to succeed. If his policies bring about a briskly growing economy and nothing more, that may be sufficient for Obama to win a second White House term.

The president has been criticized for trying to do too much in his first year rather than focusing on a few important issues. But the size of Obama's agenda is less of a problem than the likelihood that much of it will be enacted, given the large Democratic majorities in the Senate and House.

The difficulty is that some of his policies are likely to hinder others. Tax hikes, increased energy costs, and new regulations work against the economic recovery that soaring spending and peacetime deficits at historic highs are supposed (by Obama at least) to spur. A more likely result: stagflation, a simultaneous surge in inflation and interest rates.

Obama is now trying to deleverage. The purpose of his speech last week was to take the risk—or at least the appearance of risk—out of his policy on Guantánamo and terrorists. He insisted the safety of Americans would never be put in jeopardy by the release of prisoners from Guantánamo or their transfer to prisons in this country.

In his appearance with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Obama toughened his policy toward Iran. His position, a risky one, had been that friendly diplomacy is the best policy for persuading the Iranians to abandon their effort to build nuclear weapons. But Obama indicated he'd turn to stronger measures if the Iranians haven't responded

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favorably by the end of 2009.

Obama has set "energy independence" as a goal. But his policies make that goal harder to achieve. His administration has refused to open new areas in the United States and offshore for oil exploration and production. It favors lavish subsidies for renewable energy (wind, solar) that will do little in the foreseeable future to make up for the shortfall in domestic production of gasoline. As the demand for gasoline increases, as it almost certainly will, there will be only one place to turn: foreign oil.

His takeover of the Big 2 in Detroit, General Motors and Chrysler, poses another risk: downright failure. The auto companies are a money pit, requiring tens of billions in federal subsidies just to stay alive. The public opposes the continued bailout of the auto companies, but Obama is stuck with it. And the chance that either company will soon return to profitability is slim.

Taken together, Obama's policies on energy, health care, and financial institutions are risky for still another reason. They require more government control of the economy, which leads inevitably to a less dynamic and innovative economy and to less growth.

The raft of new regulations should have the same effect. Obama's crackdown on the credit card industry may be justified on ethical grounds. But there's a simple economic fact that applies here: The more you regulate something, the less you get of it. Though more credit is critical to reviving the economy, the new regulations mean we'll get less of it.

Obama is also a fan of labor unions. Through card check or whatever else it takes, Obama wants unionization of the workforce to grow. This, too, is risky. Unionization leads to higher wages for union workers but fewer jobs for everyone else.

For Obama, the best outcome in 2009 is counterintuitive. The fewer of his risky initiatives that pass—in effect deleveraging his agenda—the better for the economy, and the better for him politically. ♦

Conservatism Is in Good Shape . . .

Even if the GOP isn't.

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

The Republican party is in a whole lot of trouble. The latest Pew Research Center report on "Trends in Political Values and Core Attitudes" shows that fewer than 25 percent of voters identify with the GOP, the lowest rating for the party in almost 20 years. The Republican party is older and less diverse than the Democratic party, as well as the country at large. And the rapid emergence of voters under 30 years old—the Millennial Generation—diminishes the salience of conservative values politics.

Good news for Democrats, right? Not quite. The Pew study, one of the most comprehensive around, does show that the GOP is dejected and demoralized. But Republican disarray hasn't guaranteed Democratic hegemony. The proportion of the electorate that identifies as Democratic in the Pew survey is well within its 20-year average. The voters who no longer identify as Republican haven't all gone to the Democrats. Most have become independents. Indeed, Pew reveals that "the proportion of independents now equals its highest level in 70 years."

The Pew survey paints a complex picture of a befuddled American electorate. The GOP is on the downswing, but the country is no more liberal than usual, and the Democrats haven't fully capitalized on their opponents' weaknesses. The GOP will probably recover from the Bush years. But, as things stand, the party also faces a demographic reckoning in the not-so-distant future. The long-term outlook is cloudy. As always.

Why is the Pew report important? Because it dispels a political myth.

You've no doubt heard: The 2006 and 2008 elections show that the United States has taken a decisive turn to the left. Our politics has, for sure. But the electorate hasn't. There may be more independents, but they aren't liberals. Overall, according to Pew, the ratio between the number of voters who say they are conservative (37 percent) and the number who say they are liberal (19 percent) "has remained largely stable over the past nine years, even while the balance of party affiliation has changed substantially."

The Pew survey asked a variety of questions about the role government ought to play in the economy. Even in the midst of a recession and banking crisis, a majority of voters said the "federal government controls too much of our daily lives" and "government regulation of business usually does more harm than good." Seventy-two percent of voters said that "poor people have become too dependent on government assistance programs." And 46 percent of respondents said they were "concerned about the government becoming too involved in health care."

The Pew data buttress other surveys that have shown public unease at liberal borrow, tax, and spend policies that expand government and the national debt. The data also show public antagonism toward a key Democratic constituency: organized labor. Seventy-six percent of respondents said that "the strength of this country today is mostly based on the success of American business." The percentage of independents who agree with the proposition that "labor unions are

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necessary to protect the working person" is at 53 percent, a 20-year low.

Big Labor drives the Obama agenda, including legislation to bypass the secret ballot in union elections and opposition to free trade agreements. But the unions are out of step with the public. Huge majorities oppose killing the secret ballot. Furthermore, according to Pew, the percentage of voters who agree that "free trade agreements are a good thing" for the United States has actually *increased* by 9 points in the last year, to 44 percent.

One more finding that spells trouble for liberals: Only 49 percent of respondents said that "people should be willing to pay higher prices in order to protect the environment." That means the Democrats are going to have difficulty passing legislation that would cap carbon emissions and thereby raise energy prices across the board.

None of this is to say that the outlook is rosy for Republicans. Far from it. The Pew data reveal four main issues for the GOP: hardly anyone wants to be associated with it, less than a quarter of self-identified Republicans are enthusiastic about their own party, support for Republicans among Hispanics (an important ethnic group) has plunged since 2004, and the incoming cohort of under-30 voters is far more accepting of homosexuality than previous generations, pitting them against the GOP's religious conservative base.

Energetic, imaginative Republican politicians will be able to correct the first two problems. As the precipitous decline in GOP ranks proves, partisan identification is subject to rapid swings. Since the ideological composition of the electorate hasn't changed all that much over the last half-decade, it's likely that the Republicans' plummeting reputation is due to President Bush's dismal second term and the feckless, corrupt GOP Congresses.

But Bush is gone and the GOP congressional majority is no more. Republicans therefore have an opportunity to make up for past mistakes. They can pick fights on issues that play to their strengths. Then Republican partisans will become enthused about their party. And you'll slowly see some of those independents move back to the GOP.

The Republicans' demographic issues will be more difficult to resolve. Once an ethnic, racial, or religious group swings heavily toward one party, it's difficult to entice them to switch sides. These days, the Democrats are picking up support among new immigrants to the United States from East and South Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. And the Millennial Generation looks decidedly liberal: nontraditionally religious, socially tolerant, environmentally conscious, and goo-goo when it comes to foreign policy. Another plus for the Democrats.

Then again, the political future is never predetermined. Pew director Andrew Kohut says he's learned that public opinion is responsive to events. The Obama administration could flop. Unforeseen occurrences could upend the debate. New, charismatic figures could arrive on the scene. When they do, they're likely to encounter a voting public skeptical of big government—and ready to embrace a politics of personal freedom and fiscal responsibility. ♦

Openness for Thee, but Not for Me

Obama gives a whole new definition to 'transparency.' BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

'I ran for president promising transparency, and I meant what I said. And that is why, whenever possible, my administration will make information available to the American people so that they can make informed judgments and hold us accountable."

That was Barack Obama last Thursday morning at the National Archives.

We have heard this tune before. On January 21, his second day in office, Obama released a memorandum on government transparency. It quoted Louis Brandeis on sunlight. It directed executive agencies to operate with a strong "presumption in favor of disclosure." It spoke of our "national commitment" to open government and proclaimed, "at the heart of that commitment is the idea that accountability is in the interest of the Government and the citizenry alike."

It has been four months. In that time, President Obama has made it clear that he believes in transparency only when it serves his own interest. His administration has used the Freedom of Information Act as a shield, and in important ways his agencies are operating under a strong presumption in favor of secrecy.

The result? The American public has not seen three batches of documents that would better allow us to "make informed judgments" and hold our elected officials accountable. The still-classified documents are deemed sensitive—not because their release would compromise intelligence but because of their political implications.

For months, several news organizations—including The Weekly Standard (see my "Second Thoughts," written with Thomas Joscelyn, in the March 16 issue)—have been trying to obtain a copy of

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the Pentagon's analysis of Guantánamo Bay detainee recidivism.

Despite the fact that we were told the report would be released in early February, and despite the fact that the Obama administration has proclaimed itself the most transparent administration in history, and despite a presidential memorandum ordering executive agencies and departments to treat Freedom of Information Act requests with a "presumption in favor of disclosure"—the Pentagon has actually taken additional steps to hide the report and keep it from both the public and lawmakers of both parties.

We were told on February 2 that the report would likely be posted on the Pentagon website that afternoon. When we followed up, we were instructed to check back "in a couple days." We made several additional attempts to obtain the report, and, on March 6, the Pentagon officially went into denial mode: "My understanding is that several requests have been received by our OSD FOIA office and it is being processed for a decision concerning release. If you would like to submit a FOIA request as well, below is a link for your convenience."

Thanks to an unauthorized leak, the *New York Times* was able to write about the report last Thursday. According to the *Times*:

> Two administration officials who spoke on condition of anonymity said the report was being held up by Defense Department employees fearful of upsetting the White House, at a time when even Congressional Democrats have begun to show misgivings over Mr. Obama's plan to close Guantánamo.

The report shows that 74 detainees released from Guantánamo have returned to jihad—some 14 percent. In his speech Thursday, Obama went to great lengths to blame the release of these detainees on the Bush administration. Fair enough. One suspects that this was just a convenient political argument. But if he was sincere, and he honestly believes the Bush administration was too lenient in its judgments about detainees, he should release the report and show us the error of their ways.

Second, the CIA denied a request from former Vice President Dick Cheney to declassify two CIA reports on the results of "enhanced interrogation" techniques. In his speech on Thursday, Obama said: "I reject the assertion that these are the most effective means of interrogation."

Why should we believe him? What evidence did he cite to support this claim? Where are the facts? What do the professionals believe? What did contemporaneous reports tell us?

On the one hand, Obama and his spokesman have refused to defend the CIA from Nancy Pelosi's reckless charges, even as his CIA director, Leon Panetta, has forcefully done so. On the other, Obama seems willing to hide behind the CIA's decision to keep information about Pelosi's briefings secret.

What information did they produce? We are left to wonder.

The CIA, with the direct approval of the Obama White House, used a technicality to keep the documents secret and hidden from public view. "In researching the information in question, we have discovered that it is currently the subject of pending FOIA litigation (*Bloche* v. *Department of Defense*, *Amnesty International* v. *Central Intelligence Agency*). Therefore, the document is excluded from Mandatory Declassification Review."

But on April 16, Obama released four Bush-era Justice Department memos that could have been withheld for the same spurious reason. The difference? Obama believes those memos help his continuing case against the Bush administration's war on terror policies. But the Cheney memos, if we are to believe the former vice president and others familiar with their contents, undermine Obama's case.

So FOIA is being manipulated to keep documents secret. Hardly a "presumption in favor of disclosure."

Finally, in the wake of Nancy Pelosi's claim that the CIA "misled" Congress, Representative Pete Hoekstra, ranking Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, requested the declassification and release of materials used in the briefings of Pelosi. Was there a PowerPoint presentation used to explain the enhanced interrogation techniques? Let's see it. Hoekstra has also asked for any internal CIA documentation related to the congressional briefings—emails among CIA officers involved in preparing the briefings, perhaps. Steny Hoyer, the second-ranking Democrat in the House, has said that he favors releasing as much documentation as possible related to the briefings, declaring that "what was said and when it was said, who said it . . . is probably what ought to be on the record as well." Even Pelosi said she'd be "happy" to have those materials made public.

The CIA rejected preliminary requests to release more information about Pelosi's briefings. Did the White House offer guidance to the agency about how to handle those requests? On the one hand, Obama and his spokesman have refused to defend the CIA from Pelosi's reckless charges, even as his CIA director, Leon Panetta, has forcefully done so. On the other, Obama seems willing to hide behind the CIA's decision to keep them secret.

So, where are the Pelosi documents? And where are the Cheney memos? And where is the Guantánamo report?

It is important to remember that the president has the ultimate declassification authority. So the only thing preventing the public from seeing these three batches of documents is Barack Obama.

"I will never hide the truth because it is uncomfortable," Obama said Thursday.

Really? ♦

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Reagan in Opposition

The lessons of 1977

By Noemie Emery

In 1977, as in 2009, the future seemed dark for the country's conservatives, shut out of all of the conduits to power, with nary a bright spot in sight. "The result of the 1976 election was Democrats in power as far as the eye could see," wrote Michael Barone in *Our Country* (1992). "It was almost universally expected that the Democrats would hold on to the executive branch for eight years; it was considered unthinkable that they could lose either house of Congress." "Once again, the death knell of the Republican Party was being sounded," added Steven F. Hayward, in his two volume study of Reagan. Notes historian John J. Pitney Jr., "The hot bet of the moment was not whether the Republican Party could reshape politics, but whether it could survive at all."

At the time, the *New York Times* said the party was "closer to extinction than ever before in its 122 year history." House minority leader John Rhodes thought it could go the way of the Whigs and vanish completely. Robert Novak said the election showed the "long descent of the Republican Party into irrelevance, defeat, and perhaps eventual disappearance."

Gerald Ford had just lost to Jimmy Carter. Republicans held 38 seats in the Senate, and just 143 seats in the House. According to a Gallup poll, more than twice as many Americans identified with the Democrats as with the Republicans. In *Fortune* magazine, election scholar Everett Carll Ladd pronounced that the GOP was "in a weaker position than any major party of the United States since the Civil War." Jimmy Carter, the incoming president, was widely regarded as the cure-all for what ailed the Democrats, a social conservative who had been a career Navy officer before coming home to take over the family business (a peanut farm in Plains, Georgia), and who planned to restore simple and homespun American virtue to a scandal-wracked land.

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If the GOP seemed washed up, so did Ronald Reagan, who had led a conservative revolt inside the party and then lost to Gerald Ford, who would lose in November. He seemed too extreme (and too much an actor) to run again. Conservatism had two big losses in just 12 years—in Reagan's 1976 primary run; and Barry Goldwater's disastrous 1964 run for the presidency. Reagan was also old: He would be 69 when the next cycle came round and 73 when, as expected, Carter finished his second term. But Reagan believed that a different, expanded, conservative movement could grow beyond the Goldwater model, that a new and expanded Republican party could grow beyond the Nixon-Ford model, and that he was the man who could bring them together. In two speeches in Washington, before and after the Carter inaugural, he explained how to do this. And then, four years later, he did.

When the messiah from Plains put his hand on the Bible, Reagan had been running for president for a little more than two years, having completed his second term as governor of California in January 1975. He had done this mainly by speaking and writing, following a program devised by three of his aides as he was about to step down from office, designed to keep him in the public eye when he was no longer governor, and establish him as the country's premier conservative voice. The plan, an idea of radio producer Harry O'Connor refined by Reagan aides Peter Hannaford and the late Michael Deaver, called for a five-minute radio address five days a week and a twice-weekly newspaper column based on those addresses, appearances on *Meet the Press* and other interview programs, and two to three speeches a month. In time, Reagan's radio talks were carried on 286 stations while his column appeared in 226 papers, giving him regular access to a national audience of about 20 million people a week. He began this regime days after he stepped down as governor, stopped it in November that year to run against Ford in the primaries, resumed it in September 1976, weeks after the convention ended, and then suspended it perma-

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nently three years later, when he began his second, and this time successful, campaign. In this program, the radio talks would emerge as his principal weapon.

"The personal campaign machine that Reagan built and ran from 1975 to 1979 was his pathway to the presidency," wrote two of his editors. "His speeches and columns were important and necessary, but his radio commentaries were the driving force." "His radio talks were ways of both keeping himself before the voters and developing the arguments that he would later put before the American people," said John O'Sullivan. "He later remarked that he developed his political views . . . mainly by writing and so having to think his way through problems. Several aides testify that they could recall him losing his temper only when he was interrupted while trying to finish a column or speech." In these years, he would think his way through nearly 1,400 addresses as he refined his philosophy, while establishing himself as the country's leading Republican. In late 1980, a broadcasting magazine wrote that if Reagan won, he should "give a low bow in the direction of Harry O'Connor."

On January 19, 1977, Reagan gave his first talk of the new Carter era, warning about the growing strength of the Soviet Union, which he felt that the outgoing Ford administration had not done enough to address. From his point of view, Carter would not be an improvement: For three years, Reagan would produce a running critique of the Carter administration's foreign policy, and the administration would give him a great deal about which to complain. In the first year alone, he protested when Carter proposed to withdraw all U.S. ground forces and nuclear weapons from South Korea without trying to force North Korean concessions; complained when Carter planned to cut $57 billion from the seven-year defense spending plan, complained when Carter suspended the development of the neutron bomb, planned to cancel the Trident nuclear submarine, and canceled the B-1 bomber in June. He protested when Carter declared that the Cold War was over (without concurrence from the Soviet Union), he opposed the SALT II treaties limiting weapons on the grounds that the arms race was the symptom, not the cause, of the Cold War and its problems, and he opposed the treaties to turn over the Panama Canal to Panama as compromising the defense perimeter of the United States. Above all, he opposed the idea of détente.

"Détente" was the policy first instituted by President Richard M. Nixon, under the tutelage of Henry Kissinger. Bearing in mind the scars of the Vietnam debacle, détente held that (1) America's power was limited; (2) America's moral authority had been compromised (by Vietnam, and resistance to civil rights measures); (3) that the Communist powers were permanent fixtures; and (4) that the United States therefore had neither the right nor the might to impose its will upon others, and must lower its sights. Hayward quotes a 1970 assessment of Kissinger: He "feels that the United States has passed its historic high point . . . is on the downhill and cannot be roused by political challenge . . . [and] his job is to give us the best deal we can get."

Reagan dissented from all these perceptions. He thought the aim of American foreign policy should be not to get along with the Communist powers but to hasten their end. He opposed the Helsinki accords because he thought they codified the captive status of Moscow's East European satellites. He believed détente conferred a false legitimacy upon states whose governments were not installed by the consent of the governed. He opposed arms control negotiations for their own sake because he thought the arms race was the symptom, not the cause of international tensions, that the cause was the Communists' expansionist tendencies, and that in these agreements the United States always gave up more than it gained. He agreed with Churchill and with the Democrats' midcentury presidents that the best way to avoid a war was to be ready to fight one, and he quoted in one of his radio addresses the phrase "No nation ever saved its freedom by disarming itself in the hope of placating an enemy," from NSC-68, one of the Cold War founding documents of the Truman administration. Thirty years earlier, these beliefs were the views of politicians of both major parties, but by the mid-1970s they were considered eccentric and dangerous, not only by the Democratic party of McGovern and Carter, but by the Republican party of Nixon and Ford. Reagan's aim was to restore these views to the national dialogue, and in time he did.

Reagan's second big theme was expansion of government, and the dangers he thought it entailed. As an ex-FDR fan, he was not wholly against government, and when he said government was the problem and not the solution, he made it clear that it became the problem only in overstepping its bounds. Its proper province, he said, was the defense of the realm, the defense of the citizens against one another, the assurance of equal opportunity for all of the people, and the care of those truly unable to care for themselves. Beyond that, he said, it was apt to cause trouble: strangling growth through regulation and taxes, and stepping on personal freedoms, including those to make choices, even unwise ones. As he told the Conservative Political Action Committee in 1977, "Liberty can be measured by how much freedom Americans have to make their own decisions, even their own mistakes."

"Reagan devoted innumerable columns, often very witty ones, to the absurdities of state regulation," wrote O'Sullivan in his book *The President, the Pope, and the Prime Minister*. And his speeches gave specific examples of the cost: Government-mandated paperwork on one campus raised administrative costs from $65,000 to $600,000. The president of Eli Lilly told him that "his firm spends more man hours

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on government-required paperwork than they do today on heart and cancer research combined."

Reagan regarded the New Deal, Hayward wrote, with a "studied ambivalence" that was neither the total acceptance of the unalloyed FDR loyalist nor the total dismissal of early conservatives. "Reagan delighted in annoying New Deal fans" by reminding them that he voted four times for their idol, and really enraged them with claims that *he* was FDR's heir. To this end, he was fond of quoting Roosevelt in a 1935 utterance, to the effect that "continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber . . . a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit" in violation of the American way.

"Reagan's principal theme, threaded through four years of broadcasts . . . was defense of America," wrote O'Sullivan. "He defended America's postwar foreign policy on the grounds that it was a bulwark against totalitarianism, America's free enterprise system on the grounds that it was more productive than government regulation, and America's traditional values on the grounds that they were both more decent and more realistic" than those that the counterculture tossed up. It looked radical, but only because it followed two profound dislocations: the overreach of the Great Society, and its attempt to enforce happiness and/or equality by government fiat, and the malaise related to the floundering in Vietnam. Reagan reached back beyond them to what had once been core tenets, a strategy that allowed him to unite people who voted for Goldwater and Johnson, people who voted for Nixon and Kennedy, the Asia-first anti-Communists of the Goldwater movement with the Europe-first anti-totalitarians of the World War II and Cold War consensus, and people who disliked the New Deal on principle with people (the Reagan Democrats and the neoconservatives) who liked the New Deal, but thought that the Great Society had gone much too far. These all disagreed, but all could cohere around certain core principles. "If Reagan was going to succeed," as Hayward wrote, "he would have to do so by proving that amidst the ephemera of modern life there were immutable aspects of the American character that could provide the way out."

In 1977, Reagan laid the intellectual groundwork for the campaign that followed and established himself as the opposition voice to the administration in power, beginning to shape an alternative vision on a myriad of fronts. In 1978, he began to build an organization around it, creating a PAC that he used in promoting his issues, campaigning for Republicans in the midterm elections, and taking two trips abroad. In April and May, he went to Japan, China, Hong Kong, and Iran, where he made a side trip to meet the shah, who was ill and besieged by Islamic insurgents. In November, he went to London where he met with Margaret Thatcher, who was then months away from becoming England's prime minister, and traveled from there to Paris, Bonn, Munich, and West Berlin, the frontline of the battle against Soviet tyranny. Meanwhile, his aides had reached out to different constituencies, including Democrats unhappy with the drift of their party and Republican regulars loyal to Ford. On June 19, he dined at George Shultz's home on the Stanford University campus with Alan Greenspan, Caspar Weinberger, and William Simon. In the same month, he met Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter, Nathan Glazer, and Irving Kristol at a dinner arranged by the *American Spectator*'s R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. None had backed him in 1976; all would back him in 1980. Reagan, who began 1977 as a losing candidate to the losing candidate in a party that seemed to have lost everything, ended 1978 as the de facto head of a party poised for a comeback that he was now starting to see.

Enjoying a joke at the incumbent's expense in March 1980

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Four things stand out about Reagan's behavior while in opposition. First, he was focused on large, central themes. Of the radio talks, over a quarter were on defense and foreign policy issues, more than a third were on the economy or energy policy, and 15 percent addressed government excess, another favorite theme. By contrast, education, health, and crime got 3 percent each; social issues and welfare 2 percent. Out of 1,044 talks over a four-year span, abortion was the main topic once. The culture wars were waged around Reagan, but largely not by him. His mind was on other things.

Second, his tone was unfailingly gracious and civil, and focused on issues, not men. He did not oppose for the sake of opposing. He criticized Carter's ideas, but seldom the man, and he almost never uttered the president's name. "A typical Reagan column was almost never partisan or even explicitly conservative," wrote John O'Sullivan.

> It selected a topic . . . provided some recent information about it . . . proposed evidence or expert testimony to suggest that the administration's proposals were mistaken, and finally reached some wider conclusion or moral. . . . Though Carter was rarely mentioned, his policies were logically examined and found wanting in clear terms, and in the most amiable tone of voice.

The "tone of voice" was important, as it did not rouse hostility. As he won in the end by bringing in large blocs of ex-Democrats, this was a critical point.

Third, Reagan was an optimist, who seized the banner of hope on behalf of his party and turned its eyes to the future, and away from the past. Traditionally, conservatism in America was a cranky and negative movement, chronically angry, and focused on what it opposed. Old-fashioned conservatism, as John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge claim in their book, *The Right Nation*, was preoccupied with "constraints and scarcity," which gave it an odd form of overlap with the national Democrats, who had gone in the past decade from being the party of growth and expansion to being the party of limits and gloom. Vietnam had damaged their faith in themselves and the future, while the emerging green movement framed consumption as turpitude. There were limits to victory, so the United States had to accept détente as a permanent strategy; there were limits to resources such as land, water, and oil, so there had to be limits to comfort, expansion, and growth. "For some varieties of the liberal mind, gloom is exhilarating, and the limits to growth offered a large-scale sequel to the Vietnam War," as Hayward tells us, noting that environmental extremism opened dazzling vistas for even more orgies of national guilt. For different reasons, leaders on all sides seemed to agree the country's best days were behind it. Reagan did not.

Reagan emerged just in time to reframe conservatism in his own image and set it up as the perfect foil to a liberal governing party that had fallen in love with decline. He was self-assured and patriotic in the sense of the old Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, and John Kennedy Democrats, and optimistic in his belief that a Goldwateresque program of less interference—i.e., lower taxes and less regulation—could liberate the creative genius of the American people and lead to still greater prosperity. Unlike Goldwater, he was both inclusive and cheerful; unlike Whittaker Chambers, he believed that his side could and would win the Cold War; and unlike William F. Buckley, who urged his followers to shout "stop!" to the onrushing currents of history, he thought history would be on his side. Because of him, Wooldridge and Micklethwait could write later that "American conservatives believe in man's ability to transform the world for the better," and point to Reagan's use of the Thomas Paine line: "We have it in our power to begin the world anew" (a line that made George Will and some other conservatives cringe). In 1977, Reagan was one of the few people who thought this was possible and to a demoralized country it would prove irresistible. According to Pitney, it was "Reagan's optimistic orientation toward the future . . . that radically distinguished him from conservatives of the early twentieth century. This change was essential to turning conservatism from an intellectual eccentricity to a true mass movement," capable of winning elections, and millions and millions of votes.

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Fourth, as an ideologue who was also a great politician, he was able to lead both a movement and party, setting out a coherent and principled message while forming and leading a diverse coalition made up of three different strands. While a movement conservative, he ran, Hayward wrote, as the unity candidate, "reaching out to Republican moderates," especially in the north and the east. The two men he picked to run with him as vice president—Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania in 1976 and George Bush four years later—were moderates, eastern in outlook (though Bush had moved to Texas years earlier), and not greatly

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loved in conservative circles. He did not campaign for his former aide Jeffrey Bell who mounted a conservative primary challenge in the 1978 midterms to Senator Clifford Case of New Jersey, and when Bell won the primary, Reagan hailed it mainly as a triumph for the tax cuts that he and Bell had supported. (Bell lost to Democrat Bill Bradley in the general election that fall.) To conservatives thinking of leaving the party, he issued a warning that if they were unable to win a majority within the country's more center-right party, they were unlikely to find one outside it. To conservatives angry at liberal Republicans, he urged them to try to persuade them, and if not, to seek common ground. "Conservatism is not a narrow ideology, nor is it the exclusive property of conservative activists," he said to those activists, and warned them that one does not become a majority party by "searching for groups" to exclude.

Seventeen days after Carter's inaugural, Reagan addressed a conservative audience six blocks away from the White House in which he described the Republican party he would build, which would be in effect a whole new creation, built of three different parts: the original base of business or fiscal conservatives, added to the new group of social conservatives—people concerned with law and order, abortion, crime, quotas, and busing—added to the foreign policy hawks and Cold Warriors, who had been pushed to the right by McGovern and Carter, and their weakness on foreign affairs. This was the "three cornered stool" of the Reagan coalition, built by adding the original Goldwater base to two sets of ex-LBJ voters, people repelled by the post-60s drift of their party, and seeking a new place to rest. Of the second group, he would say, "The New Republican Party I envision will not be . . . one limited to the country-club-big-business image. . . . [It] is going to have room for the man and the woman in the factories, for the farmer, for the cop on the beat, and the millions of Americans who may never have thought of joining our party. . . . The Democratic Party turned its back on the majority of the social conservatives during the 1960s. The New Republican Party of the late 70s and 80s must welcome them, seek them out, [and] enlist them, not only as rank-and-file members but as leaders and candidates." Sarah Palin, Wasilla moose-hunter, would have been eagerly welcomed by Reagan, and would never have left him unnerved.

For the liberal hawks, who looked back (as did Reagan) to the FDR era, there was a liberal dose of his freedom agenda, expressed in the language of Winston Churchill (but not of Nixon or Carter or Ford). Sounding like Churchill at Fulton College, Missouri, he brought the Iron Curtain up to date more than 30 years later.

> From the western border of East Germany, through middle and eastern Europe, through the awesome spaces of the Soviet Union, on to the Bering Strait in the north, down past the immensity of China, still further down to Vietnam and the South China Sea—in all that huge, sprawling, inconceivably immense area, not a single political or personal or religious freedom exists.

He called the Soviet Union "the very heart of the darkness." He went back past Vietnam to the language of Roosevelt, Truman, and Kennedy, and past them to Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, to the "righteous might" evoked by FDR after Pearl Harbor, to their abiding belief, as he would put it later, that "America is still the abiding alternative to tyranny. That is our purpose in the world—nothing more and nothing less."

Reagan's conservatism was one part Barry Goldwater (the small government part), one part the foreign policy of Truman and Roosevelt, and one part the traditional social mores that had been the common currency of people in both major parties until the late 1960s had blown it apart. As such, he was able to rally the Goldwater base, and then to shake loose many millions of Democrats, among them the onetime Young Socialist Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, who would become Reagan's ambassador to the United Nations, and at the Republican convention in 1984 would blow the roof off the building when she said that the post-60s Democrats, in every crisis, would "blame America first." Kirkpatrick remained so at odds with the domestic approach of the small-government faction that it was only years later that she became a Republican. Reagan did not seem to mind.

Everything Reagan became while he was president came into focus during the first two years of the Carter administration. He defined and remade the conservative movement, made himself into the voice of that movement, and then made himself into the lead opposition to Carter, and to the liberal forces Carter led. Reagan recast the conservative movement from a fringe to a vast, inclusive political presence, and rebuilt the Republican party around it, as a large and a national force. He was optimistic, inclusive, positive, disciplined, and focused on large issues. He was a conservative and a Republican, who understood the two roles of a movement and party, and how the two roles can converge. Charm did not hurt, but he made his case through exposition: He never opposed without proposing an alternative, and he understood that his role was less to attack than to persuade. He understood that the Republican party has no obligation to present the conservative movement with a nominee to its liking, but that the conservative movement has the obligation to lay out its case in so convincing a manner that it persuades most Republicans, most independents, and even some Democrats to follow its banner. This is what Reagan did while in opposition. It is what conservatives could start doing right now. ♦

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Arabs vs. Iranians

Courtesy of the Jews

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

Americans like to think big in foreign policy, so they yearn to settle the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. Both Democrats and Republicans have repeatedly tried to rally the region's denizens for a "comprehensive settlement" and thereby transform the Middle East. George W. Bush's desire to change the region's politics by establishing a democracy in Iraq actually seems more timid, invested with fewer questionable assumptions, than the proposition that a settlement of the 60-year-old Israeli-Palestinian imbroglio will fundamentally change America's standing among Muslims.

Nevertheless, confronted with the likelihood of an Iranian nuclear weapon, the Obama administration is loading ever more strategic expectations onto the people of the Holy Land. "For Israel to get the kind of strong support it's looking for vis-à-vis Iran," warned Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, "it can't stay on the sidelines with respect to the Palestinians and the peace efforts." The two "go hand in hand."

According to Clinton, Arab states want "very much to support the strongest possible posture toward Iran. . . . They believe that Israel's willingness to reenter into discussions with the Palestinian Authority strengthens them in being able to deal with Iran." But does this really make sense? Might it be more likely that by throwing an American spotlight again on the Israelis and the Palestinians and the latter's internal differences, the president will unintentionally help the Iranians more than us? The president could well, through determined efforts to bring peace, scare and weaken the Arab leaders he wants to help and further isolate the Israelis, leaving them on their own when it comes to stopping the Iranian quest for a bomb. Like its predecessor, the Obama White House is slowly backing into a containment strategy against the clerical regime. Unfortunately, what worked against the Soviet Union is unlikely to work against Iran.

Unstated in Secretary Clinton's warning is the assumption that an Arab bloc could be assembled to oppose Iran, and that this would benefit Israel and the United States. But for all practical purposes we've seen an Arab bloc of Sunni dictators, kings, and sheikhs opposed to the Islamic Republic since 1979. And the results have been mixed. When Saddam Hussein invaded Iran in 1980, he had the sympathy of most Arab leaders. When his war started to go badly after the Iranian victory of Khorramshahr in 1982, he had the active support of the Gulf Arab states, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Their financial aid mattered. Without their support, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's die-hard believers probably would have collapsed the Baathist state.

Secretary of State Clinton's warning assumes that an Arab bloc could be assembled to oppose Iran, and that this would benefit Israel and the United States. But for all practical purposes we've seen an Arab bloc opposed to the Islamic Republic since 1979. And the results have been mixed.

This is the only instance of an Arab bloc producing a clear strategic victory over Iran. There is no contemporary parallel to the Iran-Iraq war alliance that could plausibly benefit either Israel or the United States. Iraq's Shiite majority, though far from an ally of Tehran, absolutely doesn't want to resuscitate the Sunni Arab vision of their country as a mailed fist against the Persian horde. The Iraqi Shia view themselves as being the victims of homegrown Sunni Arab dictators who regularly used pan-Arabism and the Iranian bogeyman—both Pahlavi and clerical—as a justification for oppression of Shiites.

When officials of the Bush administration tried to depict post-Saddam, democratic Iraq as a bulwark against Iran, Shiite Iraqi officials and clerics cringed. Historically the most religiously consequential land outside of Arabia—all of the most holy cities of Shiism are within its borders—Iraq never

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again wants to play in any Arab cold war against the region's Shiite powerhouse. Such a contest could only roil Iraq's still-dicey intercommunal relations, needlessly antagonize Tehran—which has shown itself willing to intrude lethally in Iraq's politics—and put the Iraqi Shia community perversely on the side of the much-disliked Sunni kingdoms of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the most anti-Shiite country in the world. So with Iraq out, the Obama administration can't suggest that an anti-Iranian Arab alliance could militarily intimidate the mullahs. Against Iran, there are only two countries that matter militarily: the United States and Israel.

But perhaps it is an Arab alliance capable of intimidating Iran economically or spiritually that Secretary Clinton has in mind, once the Israelis make concessions to the Palestinians. This also seems far-fetched. Sunni Arab states have never effectively implemented economic sanctions against Iran since (1) they really don't have anything to sanction—trade between the Islamic Republic and Sunni Arab states is so small as to be meaningless to the oil-based Iranian economy—and (2) most Arab states are connoisseurs of an Italian economic ethic: They will trade with their worst enemies, even if they don't do so openly. It's a very good bet that the commercially minded friends and family of Egypt's ruler, Hosni Mubarak, who has for two years been warning his fellow Sunni Arabs about a rising Shiite menace, would gladly cut trade deals with Iran's commercial elite.

This leaves us with the realm of soft power and the battle of religious ideas. Since 1979, a massive struggle has been taking place between Saudi Arabia and clerical Iran. The two countries, which see themselves as vanguards of the faithful and represent different but overlapping strains of Islamic fundamentalism, loathe each other. It is impossible to overstate the effect that their missionary tug of war has had on the practice of Islam in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Europe.

With nearly limitless funding and the advantage of holding to globally predominant Sunni Islam, Saudi Arabia decisively won the first round. The Saudi creed, Wahhabism, has pushed the Sunni identity in Arab lands in a profoundly conservative direction since the Islamic revolution. Institutions, like Egypt's al-Azhar seminary, that once stood as bulwarks against the crude Wahhabi faith, have largely been coopted through Saudi-financed endowments and scholarships. The contemporaneous collapse of the political legitimacy of Arab secular dictatorships—in Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser was popular; his successor Anwar Sadat was increasingly disliked; *his* successor Hosni Mubarak is despised—has further opened the field to Islamist organizations, usually funded much more generously by the Saudis than by the Iranians. The communications revolution of the 1980s and 1990s allowed Muslim fundamentalists everywhere to propagate their views more efficiently and give each other spiritual reinforcement. At just the right moment, the Soviet-Afghan war (1979-89) gave the Sunni world's most militant and intrepid jihadists a place to coalesce and refine their thoughts and skills.

This fundamentalist renaissance wouldn't have been so intense without Saudi cash, and it certainly fortified anti-Shiite tendencies among many Sunnis. But a funny thing has happened in the last 15 years: Revolutionary Iran's Islamic message has become a lot less Shiite, and the Sunni world's embrace of revolutionary martyrdom and resistance to illegitimate government has become more Shiite. With deep roots in Islamic history, martyrdom isn't a Shiite Iranian invention, but the modern theological sharpening of this instrument done by revolutionary Iranians and their Arab offspring, the Lebanese Hezbollah, produced a holy-warrior mentality in the early 1980s that was deeply admired by Sunni militants. And as radical Islam has modernized and globalized, its traditional divisions—Shiism versus Sunnism is one of the oldest—have become less important than modern "values," such as anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Zionism.

There is still usually no love lost between Sunni and Shiite militants, but they can cooperate for higher causes,

Members of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood at a pro-Hamas demonstration in Cairo.

AP PHOTO / AMR SHARAF

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and the most felicitous common ground is their hatred of the United States, the cutting edge of the culture-destroying, female-liberating West, and its Palestinian-oppressing advance guard, Israel. This explains why al Qaeda militants would accept, and the clerical regime would offer them, laissez-passers even though elements of al Qaeda are virulently anti-Shiite. This explains why the Sunni fundamentalist mother ship, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, never an enthusiastically anti-Shiite organization, has become almost pro-Iranian; and why Hamas, a Palestinian offshoot of the Brotherhood, has gladly accepted arms and money from Tehran and shows no sign of diminishing its ties to the mullahs despite increasing pressure from the Mubarak government and Saudi Arabia, which also funds Hamas, to do so. The considerable popularity among Sunni Arabs of Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah and Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stems directly from their uncompromising, loud opposition to American influence and to the existence of a Jewish state in the Middle East.

The Obama administration appears to believe that having the rulers of Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia threaten to ramp up their rhetoric against the clerical regime would hurt the Islamic Republic. Although not particularly bold against Iran publicly, the Saudis are livid in private about recent Shiite riots in their own oil-rich Eastern Province and in Bahrain, where it is assumed, not necessarily correctly, that Iran had a hand in the trouble. Saudi Arabia may well again increase its funding for anti-Iranian missionary work. It's a decent bet that Saudi Arabia will soon put pressure on impoverished Pakistan—which may have received financial assistance from Riyadh to build its "Muslim bomb"—to give the kingdom nuclear weapons if Iran goes nuclear. Neither America nor Israel can expect any good to come from this.

While Iraq's Sunni community was losing the battle of Baghdad in 2006-07, President Mubarak and Jordan's King Abdullah let loose a barrage of anti-Shiite diatribes aimed at the Iranians and the Iraqi and Lebanese Shia. Their efforts to paint a menacing Shiite arc, ready to strike at the Arab Sunni heartland like a scimitar, fell flat, especially in Egypt, where the population has certain Shiite sympathies. Both men still lobby vigorously against Iran behind closed doors, as do many of the fearful Arab Sunni potentates of the Persian Gulf states, but they are now more guarded in public. Mubarak is in the unenviable position of having the reverse-Midas touch. If he's for something, the odds are good that a substantial portion of the Egyptian people would question whether it's in their best interest. (Iran's clerical overlords actually have a similar problem. This is one reason America's image in the Islamic Republic has improved as the clerical regime has grown increasingly unpopular, and why even in the clerical stronghold of Qom young men and women mock the much-disliked ruling elite by joking about "Palestine"—a once holy cause that the young no longer find so sacred.)

Although Mubarak's commitment to the peace process is very much in question (we can only assume that Clintonites serving in the Obama administration recall how assiduously Mubarak worked to undermine Palestinian-Israeli negotiations at the end of Bill Clinton's presidency), what isn't in question is how powerful the Muslim Brotherhood has become in Egypt. There are many reasons for this, but a not insignificant one is the Brotherhood's unflagging hostility to the idea of a Jewish state in the Middle East.

To Egyptian Sunnis, Iran's highly restricted democracy-cum-theocracy can actually appear progressive. Ali Larijani, one of the brightest, best-educated, and most lethal of Iran's ruling elite, loves to highlight the likelihood of fundamentalists' gaining political dominance in the Arab world if democracy spreads. No friend of representative government at home, Larijani is a big fan of it among Sunni Arabs. It's a perverse situation for the United States: We back the corrupt autocrats, while the Iranian regime champions political reform, which probably would give significant political clout, if not outright dominance, to Muslim fundamentalists who have much more in common ideologically with Iran's Islamists than with the United States. Among devout Sunni Arabs—easily over half the population in Egypt—Iran has the rhetorical high ground.

A loud Obama push for the peace process is much more likely to strengthen the Egyptian Brotherhood than weaken it. This is why Mubarak would probably repeat his behind-the-scenes sabotage of any meaningful negotiations that got off the ground. But it is highly unlikely that meaningful negotiations can begin, given the power of Hamas among Palestinians and the decrepitude of Fatah's Palestinian Authority under Mahmoud Abbas.

What Mubarak needs most is American money and military hardware and some political means to put Hamas off balance in Gaza. But under no circumstances would he permit sufficient political progress among Palestinians that he could be labeled by the Muslim Brotherhood a betrayer of the faith. Nor would Mubarak ever dare favor dropping the demand for a Palestinian "right of return"—a nonnegotiable point for any Israeli government since the right of return would mean the end of the Jewish state. Although the peace-processing establishment in Washington may not admit it, Muslim fun-

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damentalists have probably decisively won the argument about the illegitimacy of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in the one country indispensable for any settlement: Egypt. Iran, not the United States, is playing the stronger hand here. Quite unintentionally, Obama is ready to make Iran stronger where it matters most.

Sooner or later it's going to dawn on the administration, and others raised on the successful containment of the Soviet Union, that there is no way we can contain the Islamic Republic. Unless America's armed forces shrink considerably, the United States can always repulse any Iranian military aggression—assuming we have the will to do so in the face of threatened nuclear retaliation. But that's not where the Iranians are likely to probe, even once armed with the bomb.

The Islamic Republic was born as a revolutionary state that believed passionately in the power of ideas, backed up always by a good deal of nefarious activity. Ali Khamenei, Iran's clerical overlord, no less than his predecessor, Ayatollah Khomeini, devoutly believes in a Middle East free of American influence. He too sees Israel as an insult to all that he holds holy. He is, however, no fool: He's been a pretty patient and pragmatic revolutionary.

Khamenei and the ruling clerical elite will just keep pushing on the increasingly fundamentalist seams of the Middle East's increasingly modern, troubled societies. In Hamas, they may well have found faithful Palestinians who will repeatedly confront the Israelis head on. United under Iran's leadership, the Sunni and Shiite faithful will wear the Jews down, so the vision goes, in the same way that devout, uncompromising Muslims finally pushed the militarily accomplished crusaders out of the Near East. A profound love of paralleling Israel's end with the demise of the crusader states is just one of many things that radical Sunnis and Shiites have in common.

So are economic sanctions the answer? It's difficult to imagine the Europeans' doing what would be necessary. Any serious sustained sanctions regime against the Islamic Republic must target the energy sector. The Iranians would be able to show easily the human suffering that comes with such measures. It's extremely unlikely the Europeans—who still recoil from the real civilian damage done to Iraq by Western sanctions against Saddam, who did his best to amplify and parade his people's pain—would have the stomach to hurt Iran.

Instead, Europeans' commercial appetites will continue to reinforce their moral sensibilities. The Islamic Republic offers a much more complex picture of good and evil cohabiting within the same society than did Baathist Iraq. Iran's exquisite contradictions—its age-old beauty that so easily enraptures—will make it virtually impossible for the United States to sustain sanctions that are more than seriously annoying. Obama, who fiercely criticized George Bush's unilateralism, will not want to alienate Europeans by trying to coerce them into sanctions with bite. Measures that only annoy Tehran will be enough neither to stop the nuke nor to change the regime.

The day after the mullahs test their nuke—as they probably will, to make sure that we know they have it—we are likely to see any European resolve in favor of sanctions evaporate rapidly. The appeasement-cum-engagement reflex will kick in heavily. As in the Cold War, the United States cannot box in the enemy all by itself. We need the Europeans. And they are unlikely to be sufficiently helpful.

The day after the mullahs test their nuke we are likely to see any European resolve in favor of sanctions evaporate. The appeasement reflex will kick in heavily. The United States cannot box in the clerical regime all by itself. We need the Europeans. And they are unlikely to be sufficiently helpful.

Which brings us back to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process: It is at best irrelevant to our efforts to tame the Islamic Republic, though it could well hurt us. A sensible, historically sensitive onlooker can only laugh contemplating what Jordan and Egypt could do against Iran. They are weak states (blessed with highly proficient internal-security services) whose leaders no longer possess much ideological or religious clout, even within their own borders. As for Saudi Arabia, the last thing in the world we ought to want to see happen is the Saudis trying to line up Sunni fundamentalists against the mullahs. It's not 1979. Their best efforts are likely to backfire horribly. And the thought of Saudi Arabia, where al Qaeda is strong and your ordinary Wahhabi believer is frightful, possessing nukes is enough to make any Israeli—or American—believe in the apocalypse.

Truth be told, unless the Iranians do something really stupid—like sponsor another terrorist attack against the United States or our allies, and thereby force Obama to contemplate preemptive strikes against the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities—the Israelis are all alone. No one is coming to their rescue. ♦

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The Worst Thing About Gay Marriage

It isn't going to work

By Sam Schulman

There is a new consensus on gay marriage: not on whether it should be legalized but about the motives of those of us who oppose it. All agree that any and all opposition to gay marriage is explained either by biblical literalism or anti-homosexual bigotry. This consensus is brilliantly constructed to be so unflattering to those of us who will vote against gay marriage—if we are allowed to do so—that even biblical literalists and bigots are scrambling out of the trenches and throwing down their weapons.

But I think that the fundamental objection to gay marriage among most who oppose it has very little to do with one's feelings about the nature of homosexuality or what the Bible has to say about sodomy. The obstacle to wanting gay marriage is instead how we use and depend on marriage itself—and how little marriage, understood completely, affects or is relevant to gay people in love. Gay marriage is not so much wrong as unnecessary. But if it comes about, it will not be gay marriage that causes the harm I fear, as what will succeed its inevitable failure.

The embrace of homosexuality in Western culture has come about with unbelievable speed—far more rapidly than the feminist revolution or racial equality. Less than 50 years ago same-sex sexual intercourse was criminal. Now we are arguing about the term used to describe a committed relationship. Is the right to marry merely lagging behind the pace with which gays have attained the right to hold jobs—even as teachers and members of the clergy; to become elected officials, secret agents, and adoptive parents; and to live together in public, long-term relationships? And is the public, having accepted so rapidly all these rights that have made gays not just "free" but our neighbors, simply withholding this final right thanks to a stubborn residue of bigotry? I don't think so.

Sam Schulman, a writer in Virginia, was publishing director of the American *and publisher of* Wigwag.

When a gay man becomes a professor or a gay woman becomes a police officer, he or she performs the same job as a heterosexual. But there is a difference between a married couple and a same-sex couple in a long-term relationship. The difference is not in the nature of their relationship, not in the fact that lovemaking between men and women is, as the Catholics say, open to life. The difference is between the duties that marriage imposes on married people—not rights, but rather onerous obligations—which do not apply to same-sex love.

The relationship between a same-sex couple, though it involves the enviable joy of living forever with one's soulmate, loyalty, fidelity, warmth, a happy home, shopping, and parenting, is not the same as marriage between a man and a woman, though they enjoy exactly the same cozy virtues. These qualities are awfully nice, but they are emphatically not what marriage fosters, and, even when they do exist, are only a small part of why marriage evolved and what it does.

The entity known as "gay marriage" only aspires to replicate a very limited, very modern, and very culture-bound version of marriage. Gay advocates have chosen wisely in this. They are replicating what we might call the "romantic marriage," a kind of marriage that is chosen, determined, and defined by the couple that enters into it. Romantic marriage is now dominant in the West and is becoming slightly more frequent in other parts of the world. But it is a luxury and even here has only existed (except among a few elites) for a couple of centuries—and in only a few countries. The fact is that marriage is part of a much larger institution, which defines the particular shape and character of marriage: the kinship system.

The role that marriage plays in kinship encompasses far more than arranging a happy home in which two hearts may beat as one—in fact marriage is actually pretty indifferent to that particular aim. Nor has marriage historically concerned itself with compelling the particular male and female who have created a child to live together and care for that child. It is not the "right to marry" that creates an enduring relationship between heterosexual lovers or a stable home for a child, but the more far-reaching kin-

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ship system that assigns every one of the vast array of marriage rules a set of duties and obligations to enforce. These duties and obligations impinge even on romantic marriage, and not always to its advantage. The obligations of kinship imposed on traditional marriage have nothing to do with the romantic ideals expressed in gay marriage.

Consider four of the most profound effects of marriage within the kinship system.

The first is the most important: It is that marriage is concerned above all with female sexuality. The very existence of kinship depends on the protection of females from rape, degradation, and concubinage. This is why marriage between men and women has been necessary in virtually every society ever known. Marriage, whatever its particular manifestation in a particular culture or epoch, is essentially about who may and who may not have sexual access to a woman when she becomes an adult, and is also about how her adulthood—and sexual accessibility—is defined. Again, until quite recently, the woman herself had little or nothing to say about this, while her parents and the community to which they answered had total control. The guardians of a female child or young woman had a duty to protect her virginity until the time came when marriage was permitted or, more frequently, insisted upon. This may seem a grim thing for the young woman—if you think of how the teenaged Natalie Wood was not permitted to go too far with Warren Beatty in *Splendor in the Grass*. But the duty of virginity can seem like a privilege, even a luxury, if you contrast it with the fate of child-prostitutes in brothels around the world. No wonder that weddings tend to be regarded as religious ceremonies in almost every culture: They celebrate the completion of a difficult task for the community as a whole.

This most profound aspect of marriage—protecting and controlling the sexuality of the child-bearing sex—is its only true reason for being, and it has no equivalent in same-sex marriage. Virginity until marriage, arranged marriages, the special status of the sexuality of one partner but not the other (and her protection from the other sex)—these motivating forces for marriage do not apply to same-sex lovers.

Second, kinship modifies marriage by imposing a set of rules that determines not only whom one may marry (someone from the right clan or family, of the right age, with proper abilities, wealth, or an adjoining vineyard), but, more important, whom one may not marry. Incest prohibition and other kinship rules that dictate one's few permissible and many impermissible sweethearts are part of traditional marriage. Gay marriage is blissfully free of these constraints. There is no particular reason to ban sexual intercourse between brothers, a father and a son of consenting age, or mother and daughter. There are no questions of ritual pollution: Will a hip Rabbi refuse to marry a Jewish man—even a Cohen—to a Gentile man? Do Irish women avoid Italian women? A same-sex marriage fails utterly to create forbidden relationships. If Tommy marries Bill, and they divorce, and Bill later marries a woman and has a daughter, no incest prohibition prevents Bill's daughter from marrying Tommy. The relationship between Bill and Tommy is a romantic fact, but it can't be fitted into the kinship system.

Third, marriage changes the nature of sexual relations between a man and a woman. Sexual intercourse between a married couple is licit; sexual intercourse before marriage, or adulterous sex during marriage, is not. Illicit sex is not necessarily a crime, but licit sexual intercourse enjoys a sanction in the moral universe, however we understand it, from which premarital and extramarital copulation is excluded. More important, the illicit or licit nature of heterosexual copulation is transmitted to the child, who is deemed legitimate or illegitimate based on the metaphysical category of its parents' coition.

Can we imagine Frank's family and friends warning him that 'If Joe were serious, he would put a ring on your finger'? Do we ask Vera to stop stringing Sally along? Gay sexual practice is not sortable into licit-if-married but illicit-if-not.

Now to live in such a system, in which sexual intercourse can be illicit, is a great nuisance. Many of us feel that licit sexuality loses, moreover, a bit of its oomph. Gay lovers live merrily free of this system. Can we imagine Frank's family and friends warning him that "If Joe were serious, he would put a ring on your finger"? Do we ask Vera to stop stringing Sally along? Gay sexual practice is not sortable into these categories—licit-if-married but illicit-if-not (children adopted by a gay man or hygienically conceived by a lesbian mom can never be regarded as illegitimate). Neither does gay copulation become in any way more permissible, more noble after marriage. It is a scandal that homosexual intercourse should ever have been illegal, but having become legal, there remains no extra sanction—the kind which fathers with shotguns enforce upon heterosexual lovers. I am not aware of any gay marriage activist who suggests that gay men and women should create a new category of disapproval for their own sexual relationships, after so recently having been freed from the onerous and bigoted legal blight on homosexual

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acts. But without social disapproval of unmarried sex—what kind of madman would seek marriage?

Fourth, marriage defines the end of childhood, sets a boundary between generations within the same family and between families, and establishes the rules in any given society for crossing those boundaries. Marriage usually takes place at the beginning of adulthood; it changes the status of bride and groom from child in the birth family to adult in a new family. In many societies, such as village India and Jewish Chicagoland, a new bride becomes no more than an unpaid servant to her mother- and sisters-in-law. Even in modern romantic marriages, a groom becomes the hunting or business partner of his father-in-law and a member of his clubs; a bride becomes an ally of her mother-in-law in controlling her husband. There can, of course, be warm relations between families and their children's same-sex partners, but these come about because of liking, sympathy, and the inherent kindness of many people. A wedding between same-sex lovers does not create the fact (or even the feeling) of kinship between a man and his husband's family; a woman and her wife's kin. It will be nothing like the new kinship structure that a marriage imposes willy-nilly on two families who would otherwise loathe each other.

Marriage is also an initiation rite. Before World War II, high school graduation was accompanied by a burst of engagements; nowadays college graduation begins a season of weddings that go on every weekend for some years. In contrast, gay weddings are rather middle-aged affairs. My impression is borne out by the one available statistic, from the province of British Columbia, showing that the participants in first-time same-sex weddings are 13 years older, on average, then first-time brides-and-grooms. This feels about right. After all, declaring gay marriage legal will not produce the habit of saving oneself for marriage or create a culture which places a value on virginity or chastity (concepts that are frequently mocked in gay culture precisely because they are so irrelevant to gay romantic life). But virginity and chastity before marriage, license after—these are the burdens of real marriage, honored in spirit if not in letter, creating for women (women as modern as Beyoncé) the right to demand a tangible sacrifice from the men who would adore them.

These four aspects of marriage are not rights, but obligations. They are marriage's "a priori" because marriage is a part of the kinship system, and kinship depends on the protection, organization, and often the exploitation of female sexuality vis-à-vis males. None of these facts apply at all to love between people of the same sex, however solemn and profound that love may be. In gay marriage there are no virgins (actual or honorary), no incest, no illicit or licit sex, no merging of families, no creation of a new lineage. There's just my honey and me, and (in a rapidly increasing number of U.S. states) baby makes three.

What's wrong with this? In one sense, nothing at all. Gays who marry can be congratulated or regarded as foolish based on their individual choices, just as I might covet or lament the women my straight friends espouse. In fact, gay couples who marry enter into a relationship that married people might envy. Gay marriage may reside outside the kinship system, but it has all the wedding-planning, nest-building fun of marriage but none of its rules or obligations (except the duties that all lovers have toward one another). Gay spouses have none of our guilt about sex-before-marriage. They have no tedious obligations towards in-laws, need never worry about Oedipus or Electra, won't have to face a menacing set of brothers or aunts should they betray their spouse. But without these obligations—why marry? Gay marriage is as good as no marriage at all.

Gay marriage, which can be created by any passel of state supreme court justices with degrees from middling law schools, lacking the authority and majesty of the kinship system, will be a letdown.

Sooner rather than later, the substantial differences between marriage and gay marriage will cause gay marriage, as a meaningful and popular institution, to fail on its own terms. Since gay relationships exist perfectly well outside the kinship system, to assume the burdens of marriage—the legal formalities, the duty of fidelity (which is no easier for gays than it is for straights), the slavishly imitative wedding ritual—will come to seem a nuisance. People in gay marriages will discover that mimicking the cozy bits of romantic heterosexual marriage does not make relationships stronger; romantic partners more loving, faithful, or sexy; domestic life more serene or exciting. They will discover that it is not the wedding vow that maintains marriages, but the force of the kinship system. Kinship imposes duties, penalties, and retribution that champagne toasts, self-designed wedding rings, and thousands of dollars worth of flowers are powerless to effect.

Few men would ever bother to enter into a romantic heterosexual marriage—much less three, as I have done—were it not for the iron grip of necessity that falls upon us when we

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are unwise enough to fall in love with a woman other than our mom. There would be very few flowerings of domestic ecstasy were it not for the granite underpinnings of marriage. Gay couples who marry are bound to be disappointed in marriage's impotence without these ghosts of past authority. Marriage has a lineage more ancient than any divine revelation, and before any system of law existed, kinship crushed our ancestors with complex and pitiless rules about incest, family, tribe, and totem. Gay marriage, which can be created by any passel of state supreme court justices with degrees from middling law schools, lacking the authority and majesty of the kinship system, will be a letdown.

When, in spite of current enthusiasm, gay marriage turns out to disappoint or bore the couples now so eager for its creation, its failure will be utterly irrelevant for gay people. The happiness of gay relationships up to now has had nothing to do with being married or unmarried; nor will they in the future. I suspect that the gay marriage movement will be remembered as a faintly humorous, even embarrassing stage in the liberation saga of the gay minority. The archetypal gay wedding portrait—a pair of middle-aged women or paunchy men looking uncomfortable in rented outfits worn at the wrong time of day—is destined to be hung in the same gallery of dated images of social progress alongside snapshots of flappers defiantly puffing cigarettes and Kodachromes of African Americans wearing dashikis. The freedom of gays to live openly as they please will easily survive the death of gay marriage.

So if the failure of gay marriage will not affect gay people, who will it hurt? Only everybody else.

As kinship fails to be relevant to gays, it will become fashionable to discredit it for everyone. The irrelevance of marriage to gay people will create a series of perfectly reasonable, perfectly unanswerable questions: If gays can aim at marriage, yet do without it equally well, who are we to demand it of one another? Who are women to demand it of men? Who are parents to demand it of their children's lovers—or to prohibit their children from taking lovers until parents decide arbitrarily they are "mature" or "ready"? By what right can government demand that citizens obey arbitrary and culturally specific kinship rules—rules about incest and the age of consent, rules that limit marriage to twosomes? Mediocre lawyers can create a fiction called gay marriage, but their idealism can't compel gay lovers to find it useful. But talented lawyers will be very efficient at challenging the complicated, incoherent, culturally relative survival from our most primitive social organization we call kinship. The whole set of fundamental, irrational assumptions that make marriage such a burden and such a civilizing force can easily be undone.

There is no doubt that women and children have suffered throughout human history from being over-protected and controlled. The consequences of under-protection and indifference will be immeasurably worse. In a world without kinship, women will lose their hard-earned status as sexual beings with personal autonomy and physical security. Children will lose their status as nonsexual beings.

Kinship creates these protections by adding the dimension of time, space, and thought to our sense of ourselves as food-eating, sex-having, child-rearing creatures. It makes us conscious not only of our parents and siblings but of their parents and siblings—our ancestors and our group identity. The family relations kinship creates—parents, godparents, uncles and sisters-in-law, cousins, clan, tribe, kingdom, nation—expand our sense of where we live and how we live. In our thought, kinship forces us to move beyond thoughtless obedience to instinct: It gives us a morality based on custom, "always adaptable and susceptible to the nuance of the situation." It makes past experience relevant to current behavior (I quote Michael Oakeshott and paraphrase Peter Winch) and gives us the ability to choose one way of conduct rather than another—the ability which Oakeshott says brings the moral life into being. The commonality of incest prohibitions and marriage rules from one community to another is a sign that we have moved from unselfconscious instinct-obedience (which works well enough to avoid parent-child incest in other species) to the elaboration of human kinship relationships in all their mutations and varieties—all of which have the same core (the organization of female sexuality, the avoidance of incest) but exist in glorious variety. Like the other great human determinant, language, kinship is infinitely variable in form but exists in some form everywhere.

Can gay men and women be as generous as we straight men are? Will you consider us as men who love, just as you do, and not merely as homophobes or Baptists? Every day thousands of ordinary heterosexual men surrender the dream of gratifying our immediate erotic desires. Instead, heroically, resignedly, we march up the aisle with our new brides, starting out upon what that cad poet Shelley called the longest journey, attired in the chains of the kinship system—a system from which you have been spared. Imitate our self-surrender. If gay men and women could see the price that humanity—particularly the women and children among us—will pay, simply in order that a gay person can say of someone she already loves with perfect competence, "Hey, meet the missus!"—no doubt they will think again. If not, we're about to see how well humanity will do without something as basic to our existence as gravity. ♦

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Peggy McMartin Buckey on trial in the McMartin Preschool molestation case, Los Angeles, 1987

AP PHOTO

Memory on Trial

Psychotherapy as expert witness

BY CAITRIN NICOL

In 1993, an elderly couple in Lowell, Massachusetts, were convicted of trapping their grandchildren in a cage in their basement, force-feeding them a murky green potion, and molesting them with a machine the size of a room. The accusation was brought by their daughter, who believed that she, too, had been abused—although she had no recollection of it until the age of 24, when her therapist interpreted a recurring nightmare as evidence of repressed trauma. On the basis of her testimony, and "information" gleaned from contorted questioning of the grandchildren, with no corroborating evidence, Ray and Shirley Souza were found guilty.

Caitrin Nicol is managing editor of the New Atlantis.

Was the courtroom haunted by the spirits of the witchcraft victims of nearby Salem, which had 19 people put to death and more than 150 imprisoned on the basis of "spectral evidence"—visitations, pains, and hauntings that only they could know?

Try to Remember
Psychiatry's Clash Over Meaning, Memory, and Mind
by Paul R. McHugh
Dana Press, 300 pp., $25

This ghostly explanation of events is scarcely more implausible than the one put forward at the time: that the Souzas were two among thousands of perpetrators in a nationwide epidemic of child molestation and satanic ritual abuse; that the events of the abuse went unnoticed for decades because the victims totally repressed their experiences and no one else was clued in to what was going on; that to cope with the submerged trauma, people "dissociated" into multiple personalities, as distinct from one another as wholly separate individuals and often unaware of the others' existence (one woman counted a duck among her 120 "alters"); and that the whole sordid affair was finally brought to light by the efforts of psychotherapists, who expertly plumbed the depths by means of hypnosis, insisting that their patients "try to remember."

Enter Paul McHugh, the distinguished former chief of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins, who stepped onstage in time for the second act of this strange drama. McHugh is that rare

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combination, a no-nonsense empirical thinker with a deep appreciation for the qualitative aspects of human life. Steering psychiatry away from Freud's world of symbols and shadows and toward a firmer footing in the brain sciences has been his great project. The program he built up at Hopkins is not, in short, the sort of place where the following sentiment (uttered by the influential psychoanalyst Elvin Semrad) would find itself at home: "We're just big messes trying to help bigger messes, and the only reason we can do it is that we've been through it before and survived."

After hearing several weird reports of extra-medical proceedings in other clinics—born of an exotic, exploding breed of therapy that psychiatry was, by that point, unable or unwilling to contain, allowing it instead to run into the courts—McHugh became involved as an expert witness for the defense. *Try to Remember* is his meticulously argued history of the "memory wars."

Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), considered very rare until the late 1980s, is supposed to be the mind's response to some severe trauma, usually sexual. The trauma, being too egregious to cope with, is repressed from conscious memory and left to the purview of the eventually emergent alters. Only by recovering and confronting these lost memories is the patient able to truly travel past them—so the theory goes. The idea was first popularly aired—as an interesting aberration, rather than an epidemic—in the 1950s, with *The Bird's Nest* and *The Three Faces of Eve* and their movie tie-ins. It was picked up again in the 1970s with *Sybil*, another book-and-movie combination, which took root in the therapeutic turf of that decade and combined with a mutant strain of Freudianism to proliferate.

Although it makes for great TV, MPD as a product of submerged memories has no basis in neurology. It is, instead, a form of hysteria: a manifestation of symptoms with a psychological rather than physical source. The patient does not deliberately choose or comprehend the fraud, but it is induced by external situations and suggestions rather than by a natural internal cause. The modern epidemic was produced by an army of therapists—a profession whose members outnumber dentists two-to-one—who drew their clientele down into the "subconscious," a mystic, ghoulish realm of unsuspected evil that they must confront in order to find "the courage to heal" (the name of a blockbuster 1988 book promoting this technique).

Patients' forays into this realm in search of rotten treasure were scheduled frequently, sometimes daily, for months or years on end, fostering—instead of the psychic resources to get on with life that good therapy provides—an extreme reliance on the therapist, that indispensable creature, for continuing the spooky insights. Along the way, everything the patients thought they knew, the coherence of their very identities and knowledge of their own past, exploded.

The resulting supernova had public consequences far beyond what its incendiaries had probably thought through. Families such as the Souzas were caught up in a tragically bizarre miscarriage of justice in which the truth was of no use to them because no one wanted to be seen as defending the damned. It is revealing of our cultural psychology to consider what crimes are so unthinkable that the mere suspicion of them renders the suspect forever outcast: Better to be a good clean killer than what these poor souls were charged with. And yet, with all of its unthinkability, this crime was readily believed to be ubiquitous, the sort of thing that "happens in the best of families"—a paradox sustained by an unholy fascination.

After some defensive scuffling in the criminal courts, McHugh and his allies at the False Memory Syndrome Foundation went on the offensive, testifying in civil suits against the therapists and clinics responsible for all the trouble. They enjoyed some success on these fronts, and the "epidemic" went into remission. But the proponents of MPD never acknowledged their error, instead retreating into metaphors and fiddling around with terminology so that they could go on peddling the same basic theory.

"History does not repeat itself," Mark Twain is rumored to have said, "but it does rhyme."

To stave off such a stanza, McHugh devotes the latter half of his book to a guided tour of related topics in psychotherapy, the structural features of the discipline that gave rise to this "hysterical response to hysteria." The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, psychiatry's central reference book, played its part in lending scientific credence to an unscientific condition in the way it classifies disorders by symptoms without regard to cause. As the new edition, *DSM-V*, is being prepared for release in 2012, its authors would be well advised to heed Dr. McHugh's suggestions for reform.

More fundamentally, McHugh traces the philosophical roots of the recovered memory craze to ideas of hidden conflict and "foundational viciousness" in family life central to the dominant school of thought at Harvard during his training there. And as goes Harvard, so goes the nation.

> Boston, town and gown, had taken to Freudian psychology and psychotherapy like a religious awakening. Especially for young men and women, Freudian ideas seemed to explain so much about human nature and to suggest even more about the reforming of society that an enthusiasm of almost Salvationist hope carried them along.

In the mold of other great Northeastern awakenings—mesmerism, abolitionism, Transcendentalism, Christian Science—its bold vision of a bright new world sold itself with a seductive beneficence. The small, dreary work of mending social cracks, conserving, protecting, and improving what is there, was pitted against razing civilization to the ground and building up a dream to take its place. But the dream, brought into the light of day, became a nightmare, and when everyone awoke, it was not to step into a great new shining world, but to move among the battered structures of the old one.

That more of them are still standing than might have been is thanks, in part, to Paul McHugh, M.D. ♦

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Spanish Revision

What we know, and what we think we know, about Franco. **BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ**

This year marks the 70th anniversary of Francisco Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War. But since his death in 1975 the perfunctory description of the Spanish dictator as a fascist, and the application of that label to his movement and resulting 46 years of governance, has appeared increasingly unpersuasive.

Franco and Hitler
Spain, Germany, and World War II
by Stanley G. Payne
Yale, 336 pp., $30

Besa
Muslims Who Saved Jews in World War II
by Norman H. Gershman
Syracuse, 121 pp., $39.95

Franco was most certainly a man of the traditional Spanish right, and an exemplar of military rule—though not a typical "political general" such as had often been seen in that country. Rather, he was the counterrevolutionary product of a profound social crisis; yet his regime had little in common with those of Mussolini and Hitler.

Unlike them, Franco did not seriously imagine that his state would last forever, or attain some renewed and grandiose imperial power. He was fundamentally satisfied with the simpler aspiration of defeating the liberal, socialist, and anarchist revolutionaries who challenged the disintegrating political structure of 1930s Spain. The Francoist state party, the Falange, was a secondary partner in power to the army. And Franco never developed a consistent, much less radical, ideology, as did Mussolini and Hitler. Once victorious, Franco's government did not seek to recast Spanish culture as Mussolini's had in Italy or Hitler's had attempted in Germany. While Pablo Picasso, resident in Paris, made a career of his public Francophobia, the Catalan surrealist Joan Miró, who had been no less fervent a supporter of the defeated Spanish Republic than Picasso, returned to the island of Mallorca in 1940 and lived undisturbed.

In the last two decades of Francoist rule, beginning in the mid-1950s, insiders were encouraged to plan a careful economic, social, and political transition away from dictatorship, which was fully accomplished between 1976 and 1981. Franco groomed the Spanish prince Juan Carlos, a defender of democracy, to succeed him—this contrast with various Communist dictators is instructive—and Francoism passed from the historical scene, leaving behind almost nothing intrinsic to it.

Most famously, as described in Stanley G. Payne's new book, Franco did not repay the substantial aid that had been extended to him, from Germany and Italy, during the civil war by actively joining the Axis during World War II. His assistance to them was limited to the dispatch of a volunteer unit, the Blue Division, to fight on the Eastern Front, along with delivery of supplies to German submarines and other naval vessels, and minor intelligence and logistical help. In addition, in a much debated aspect of modern Spanish history, Franco's diplomats in Greece and Eastern Europe succeeded in rescuing Sephardic Jews, whose ancestry was Iberian, from the Holocaust.

Of the leading non-Spanish historians who observed Francoism directly, Payne, emeritus professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, may be considered the last man standing. His work has always been founded on close examination of original sources, at which he excels, but has also lacked analytical depth. Although he has contributed little that is truly original, and his work is sometimes pedantic, impressionistic, and contradictory, he has become the doyen of Franco experts outside Spain, mainly reworking the same material since the appearance of his first book, *Falange* (1961). And fortunately, unlike his main rivals, the American Gabriel Jackson and the Briton Paul Preston, he has not succumbed to sentimentality about Stalin, the Soviet Union, and their deceitful "friendship" with the Spanish Republic. Rather, his earlier Yale volume, *The Spanish Civil War, The Soviet Union, and Communism* (2004), offered a sharpened critique of Soviet perspectives and practices in Spain.

But the author of *Franco and Hitler* has left one important matter incompletely addressed here. He has often treated the Falange more or less definitively as a fascist phenomenon, and while his contribution to the discussion of Spanish-German relations justifies doubts about this approach, he never fully resolves whether the Spanish general who said no to Hitler really emulated the rulers in Berlin and Rome. Rather, he describes the Franco regime as "a national authoritarian state . . . modeled, however loosely," on Italian and German totalitarianism. Payne does note, however, that while Franco repeatedly (and with unquestionable sincerity) expressed sympathy for Hitler and attachment to the global aspirations of the Axis, Hitler harbored a deep contempt for Spanish Catholicism.

Hitler spoke in terms remarkably similar to those employed in today's atheist polemics, declaring in 1942 that "One cannot succeed in conceiving how much cruelty, ignominy and falsehood the intrusion of Christianity has spelt for this world of ours." Rumors circulated in Spain that Hitler considered the Spanish dictatorship insufficiently fascist, and

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had promised Mussolini that Franco would be replaced by an authentic peer of the Axis leaders. Hitler's anti-Catholicism even turned him against Spain's most important Nazi advocate, Ramón Serrano Suñer, Franco's brother-in-law and, during 1940-42, his foreign minister.

Payne's narrative makes clear that numerous lesser figures in Spanish society encouraged Franco to favor greater involvement in the war led by Berlin and Rome. Some believed that the war would produce a redistribution of colonial possessions, to the detriment of Britain and France, in which Spain could regain an empire based in North and West Africa. Others thought the struggle against revolution embodied in Franco's initial crusade must naturally find fulfillment in the German assault on Russia. But Franco's ruling stratum also included powerful individuals who favored better relations with Britain and France in the interest of Spanish recovery after the devastation of civil war. Franco himself communicated with Berlin in flattering terms, gushing with admiration for Germany and Hitler, and even echoing the more enthusiastic Germanophiles within his entourage, while avoiding burdensome and risky commitments.

The provision of German and Italian military personnel and equipment helped Franco win the civil war, but according to Payne, Hitler never saw Spain as a major strategic factor. German aims in Spain were, on balance, mainly economic: above all, to obtain Spanish minerals. Even the possibility that Spain and Germany together might seize Gibraltar from Britain, although a desirable goal for Hitler, was not among his priorities. Negotiations to bring Spain into the war on the German side, undertaken spasmodically, were obstructed by Nazi arrogance. And Franco, when he seemed to believe that joining in the war could really benefit Spain's economy and secure expansion of its sphere of influence, offered Berlin Spain's entire export mining output, control of mining properties in Morocco to be seized from France, shared administration of similar French and British enterprises inside Spain, and other concessions in addition to the use of conquered Gibraltar.

General Franco at Vinaroz, 1938

AP PHOTO

But the Germans wanted the small colonies Spain then held in West Africa, and one of the Canary Islands, while the Vichy regime in France seemed to Berlin a more reliable guardian of broader Axis interests in Africa.

When Hitler and Franco met in October 1940 at Hendaye on the Spanish border with France, in their sole personal encounter, Franco was intent on wresting serious gains from the Germans. But he also bored Hitler with his garrulous reminiscences of his service as a colonial commander in the Spanish-held northern zone of Morocco. Germany and Spain agreed to a protocol under which both sides seemed to get what each wanted: Germany would acquire an active ally, and Spain would be handed a large portion of West Africa, so long as France could be compensated by imperial possessions taken from the British.

But this supposed accord was destined to remain unrealized. Hitler grew tired of haggling with Franco, and after the German invasion of Russia, Western Europe ceased to occupy a central place in Germany's attentions.

Officially, Spain stayed out of the war, and although much retrospective rhetoric on the Hitler-Franco relationship painted Franco as a sly fox outwitting Hitler, their mutual temptation provided little more than footnotes to history. Eventually, Payne's meticulous inventory of the extended inveiglements of Berlin and Madrid becomes, for nonspecialists, a tedious read. Spain was too weakened by its civil war to furnish significant support to the Axis, and with France subjugated, Spain remained consigned to the marginal place in continental affairs to which it was long relegated.

The ideological link between the German and Spanish dictators was too attenuated, Franco's adoration of Hitler was too superficial, and such historical and geographical facts trumped "fascist" solidarity. Moreover, Franco's "relative immunity" to Nazi racism toward Jews (to borrow Payne's vocabulary) underscores the shallow character of the similarity between the two regimes: Payne has dedicated two chapters here to the role of the Franco government in rescuing Sephardic Jews from the Nazis. This topic, although well known among Holocaust historians, has been orphaned by Franco's fascist reputation. Saving Jewish lives, it seems, is of lesser importance because it was accomplished by a rightist, rather than a liberal, government.

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Payne describes how, beginning in the 19th century, Sephardic Jews living outside Spain were offered Spanish citizenship, and a few thousand were granted such status. Franco, while a serving officer in Spanish Morocco, became friendly with prominent personalities among the thousands of Sephardim living there and descended from Jews expelled from Spain at the end of the 15th century. During World War II tens of thousands of European Jewish refugees with transit visas were allowed to enter Spain. But Spanish diplomats also acted to protect Sephardim with Spanish citizenship from the Nazis. Sebastián de Romero Radigales, the Spanish consul in Athens, prevented the deportation to Nazi death camps of hundreds of Sephardim from the Greek city of Salonika.

In Budapest the Spanish representative Angel Sanz Briz intervened to keep up to 3,500 variegated Jews out of Nazi hands, and an Italian purchasing agent in the Hungarian capital, Giorgio Perlasca, assisted Sanz Briz, as well as Raoul Wallenberg. Payne argues that Spanish rescue efforts were exaggerated by the Franco state to improve its standing with the Allies once the war had clearly turned against Germany. But his book was finished before the recent issuance of *S.R. Radigales y los Sefardíes de Grecia (1943-1946)* (S.R. Radigales and the Sephardim of Greece) by Matilde Morcillo Rosillo. This is a documentary collection reproducing materials in Spanish, English, and Greek, and an important addition to Holocaust studies, illustrating in eloquent detail the exhaustive activity of Radigales to keep the Greek Sephardim alive.

A similarly small but meaningful effort on behalf of Jews was, proportionately, much more successful in Greece's neighbor Albania, where local authorities sabotaged Nazi anti-Jewish measures so completely that not a single Jew was handed over to them. Albania was alone among Axis-occupied countries in ending World War II with *more* Jews than it had at the beginning. The actions of Albanians as "Righteous Among Gentiles" were commemorated at the Yad Vashem memorial two years ago with an exhibit assembled by the photographer Norman Gershman, and titled *Besa*—an Albanian term referring to protection as dictated by personal honor. Gershman shows portraits of Albanians who concealed, disguised, and otherwise sheltered Jews, and although the text is occasionally faulty (referring to major Kosovo cities like Gjakova and Prizren as villages), *Besa* includes much remarkable information.

'Spain Has Arrived,' 1939

To cite one point, Haxhi Dedebaba Reshat Bardhi, leader of the Bektashi order of Sufis who are headquartered in Albania and count up to two million Albanian-speaking members, states that the Bektashis were mobilized as a body to hide Jews wherever they could. This may well explain why most of the rescued Jews were hidden in central and southern Albania, traditional Bektashi regions.

While Gershman's volume stresses the Muslim faith of many Albanians who saved Jews, another new book in Albanian and English, *Prania historike dhe shpëtimi i hebrenjve gjatë Luftës* (The Historic Presence and Rescue of Jews During the Second World War), reveals that Albanian Catholics, as well as Muslims, were similarly righteous. Edited by the leading Albanian historian Shaban Sinani, the volume includes much fascinating material from Albanian archives, literary studies, and anecdotal material. It presents evidence that long-accepted claims that hundreds of Jews were successfully deported from Kosovo by the Nazis are incorrect. But more remarkably, we learn for the first time that the Roman Catholic clerics Vinçenc Prennushi, archbishop of Durrës, and Shtjefën Kurti, a parish priest in Tirana, baptized Jews to assure their survival.

Prennushi and Kurti are major figures in Albanian Catholic history, above all as martyrs to communism. Prennushi, a leading poet and folklore collector, suffered horrible torture before his death in prison in 1949. Kurti was killed in 1972 for the supposed "crime" of baptizing an infant boy, since Albania's despot Enver Hoxha had declared Albania the world's first and only "atheist state" in 1967. The Christian civilization that, in Spain, proved a barrier against fascist extremism could not so easily withstand the brutalities of communism: The sacrament of baptism saved Jews from the Nazis, but could not prevent the slaying by the communists of the priest who administered it.

If the common description of Franco as a fascist is doubtful, so is that of the Basque nationalist movement, which produced the terrorist force called Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna (Basque Land and Liberation, known by its acronym ETA), as a liberal or leftist phenomenon. Payne writes that, in Spain, "Basque nationalism developed the only racist doctrine in the German sense, for a good many years holding that Basques were a distinct, pure, and superior race. Basque nationalists were also strongly anti-Jewish."

The Basque Nationalists had been swept into the Spanish Civil War as supporters of the Republic, almost by accident. Their natural politi-

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cal inclination would have been to back Franco, but they disagreed with the centralist conservative Spanish authorities over local municipal autonomy, and allied with the Catalans, who were leftist nationalists. Here, too, diverse attitudes within the Catholic Church were significant: Combat between the Basques and Francoists was a war between groups of conservative Catholics rather than a confrontation of revolution and counterrevolution. In 1937, a year after the war began, Basque Nationalists capitulated to Italian forces fighting alongside Franco. In this instance, the description of the opponents of the Spanish Republicans as "fascists" is undeniable.

In April 1937 the traditional Basque capital of Guernica had been bombed by German warplanes in a massacre memorialized by Picasso's famous mural. Guernica was a "warning" to the Basques, according to the Spanish journalist Xuan Cándano, whose *El Pacto de Santoña (1937): La rendición del nacionalismo vasco al fascismo* (The Pact of Santoña, 1937: The Surrender of Basque Nationalism to Fascism) is a necessary demystification of Basque Nationalist political history. Cándano demonstrates that the Basque Nationalists had negotiated with the Franco forces, as well as the Italians, from the onset of the war. And these transactions were obviously more successful, for Franco, than anything later pursued with Hitler.

Given the volume of writings, films, and other productions that have appeared on the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the Holocaust, it is hard to imagine that any fresh evidence of nuance or even unexpected heroism might emerge. But as these new books show, much in the mountainous historical record accumulated during the 20th century was skewed by political emotions and propaganda to manipulate and distort what really happened in these chapters of human misery. With time, historical and journalistic research has progressed, and it may be that only now can we properly, objectively, and accurately assess these remarkable events. ♦

Greatness Quantified

The individual makes a difference in history.

BY DAVID AIKMAN

AP PHOTO

Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, 1943

It was just after his reelection in 1864 that Abraham Lincoln memorably said: "It has long been a grave question," he said on a cold November night in Washington, "whether any government, not too strong for the liberties of its people, can be strong enough to maintain its existence in great emergencies."

Under Lincoln's leadership, of course, the American republic had survived its own "great emergency," the ordeal of the Civil War; it had—barely—maintained its liberties, and of course had survived intact. Another question, however, quickly pops up to follow Lincoln's: How can constitutional republics be sure that the leaders they thrust into power during "great emergencies" will "maintain" the republic rather than become its tyrant?

How can we be sure to raise a Lincoln rather than a Napoleon?

In this thoughtful, learned, and often witty book, Waller Newell addresses the issues of what democratic states look for when they search for leaders, and how qualities of character, intellect, conviction, and temperament sometimes balance each other, and sometimes do not. He also confronts the issue of what kinds of leadership are best suited to the particular seasons of a democratic nation's life.

A few pages into *The Soul of a Leader*, in a fascinating illustration of how art can flatter life, Newell describes the scene of actor Martin Sheen's appearance at the 2004 Democratic National

The Soul of a Leader
Character, Conviction, and Ten Lessons in Political Greatness
by Waller R. Newell
HarperCollins, 352 pp., $25.99

David Aikman is the author, most recently, of The Delusion of Disbelief.

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Convention. Sheen, who played President Jed Bartlet in *The West Wing*, a television series, is applauded by the conventioneers as though his character were a real figure on the American political scene. Of course, the Bartlet character is a wish-list of presidential qualities and pedigree as dreamed up by any imaginative Democratic political consultant: a New Englander of patrician background and New Hampshire governing experience, Nobel Prize winner in economics, Roman Catholic alumnus of Notre Dame, spouse of an attractive, slightly Dixieish thoracic surgeon. This TV-flattering-politics incident, however, raises enduring questions about the leadership that actually does rise to the surface in democratic societies.

In his introductory chapter—"What are we looking for in a leader?"—Newell introduces the question of what Americans hope to find in a leader (including in his narrative the Martin Sheen/*West Wing* incident) and deals with some of the broad considerations of leadership that have come into play in recent presidential elections. He deals with charisma (a Max Weber coinage, by the way), with the cynicism that has polluted so much of the way we view leaders, and with the problematic issue of "character."

"Character counts," says Newell, making an obvious point. Yet he also fetches in the almost archaic notion of "honor." In a section entitled, "The Virtue that Dare Not Speak Its Name," Newell quotes Peter Berger's pithy observation about the view of honor held by American elites: "Honor occupies about the same place in contemporary usage as chastity. An individual asserting it hardly invites admiration and one who claims to have lost it is an object of amusement rather than sympathy."

Yet Newell notes how important honor was in Lincoln's political career, how in different ways it inspired Robert E. Lee, Theodore Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill. Honor, of course, has always been a central feature of reflections on leadership among thinkers in the Western tradition from Plato through Cicero, and onwards. Honor, or a desire for it, is one of the ingredients of ambition. And without ambition, no leader will rise above the humdrum and attempt to exercise great leadership.

Of course, Newell's book is topical in that it was published just after the latest presidential election when, in Newell's view, a generational change in politics was taking place. For the first time a candidate—Barack Obama—had been shaped by neither World War II nor the Cold War. "Obama," Newell says, "is articulate and exudes a natural grace in public perhaps not seen since John F. Kennedy"—to whom, of course, Obama is frequently compared. Newell acknowledges Obama's "real magic . . . when he speaks," but notes that, unlike Kennedy, who was a genuine war hero and elected three times to the House and twice to the Senate, Obama as a candidate was "mainly a candidate of abstract nouns—peace, hope, change, the future—that leave one in doubt about a strong sense of purpose or the grit of his inner personality."

Honor, or a desire for it, is one of the ingredients of ambition. And without ambition, no leader will rise above the humdrum and attempt to exercise great leadership.

That "grit," of course, has always defined great leaders of democracies in times of crisis. Sometimes it is a display of ruthlessness that makes the squeamish turn away: Churchill terror-bombing Germany to break the German will, Nixon bombing Hanoi and Haiphong on Christmas Day in 1972 in order to compel the North Vietnamese back to the negotiating table.

At other times, it is a simple conviction of what to do in a great conflict that distinguishes great leaders from ordinary folk. Ronald Reagan, who was consistently underestimated before taking office and consistently underrated by liberal elites after leaving it, told his national security adviser Richard Allen, in their very first chat, what he wanted to see happen in the Cold War: "Here's my idea of our relations with Russia," he said. "We're going to win, and they're going to lose."

Barack Obama, of course, both campaigned and entered office with little or no "war-winning" discourse, describing his primary goal to be that of fixing America's domestic problems. But by the end of his time in office, Newell warns, Obama "will have been pulled, with lesser or greater reluctance, into various foreign hot spots."

What those "hot spots" are for democratic societies can vary from Lincoln's civil war to Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam to Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt's war against German fascism and Japanese militarism. Wars, however, have a way of defining not just leaders but the republics they govern in ways that can change the character of those republics. And in one of his longest and most insightful sections Newell focuses on the dilemmas that Athens faced in its struggle with Sparta during the Peloponnesian War.

Thucydides' account of that conflict has drawn the attention of students of leadership in the West from Hobbes through Machiavelli and Theodore Roosevelt, who read *The Peloponnesian War* at least twice while in the White House, one of those times in the original Greek. He notes the tragic irony that the one man who had sufficient talent and grit to win the war, Alcibiades, was denied command of the expedition by the Athenians, who feared his vices might pervert his character against the Athenians themselves, whereas the man who advised against the Peloponnesian adventure, Nicias, was ultimately tasked with commanding it. It was a military disaster that brought about the surrender of Athenian democracy to the collectivist, militarist oligarchy of Sparta.

The Soul of a Leader has other virtues in addition to its insights into the survival struggles of an ancient democracy. Newell displays, again and again, some pithy phrasing that captures

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leaders (and spouses) who have been featured in recent American history. The electorate that brought to power Reagan, for example, "sensed that too many Democrats, for all their profession of populism, disliked capitalism, [and] looked down on the middle class as gas-guzzling, polyester-clad vulgarians." Elsewhere he writes that the "cheesiness and mock humble hayseed air of Carter's inaugural gave way to the splashy excess of Reagan's, a Gilded Age mélange of Versace-draped trophy wives."

There we have a vignette of Laura Bush as someone who "recalls Lady Byrd Johnson in her warmth and fortitude with none of the leathery Kate Hepburn salt-water and mackinaw briskiness of the president's mother, a true Northeastern matriarch." These brisk and vivid evocations of people, mood, and era are worth the price of the book itself.

Newell, however, is wise and refreshingly unpartisan in his dissection of both Reagan and Carter. The latter's masterstroke, in Newell's characterization, "was to try to reconcile the generations by making the political values of the Sixties generation seem to flow directly out of an older American tradition of Jeffersonian agrarian populism and distaste for the amoral Great Power realpolitik of the Old World—a cynicism engendered by the would-be Gaullist Nixon and his devious Metternich, Kissinger."

Unfortunately, as Newell makes clear, Carter's "evangelical zeal to purge and reform those who had chosen America as their ally" allowed "one of the most bloodthirsty totalitarian dictatorships in the 20th century"—Ayatollah Khomeini's theocrats—to come to power in Iran. Carter was a decent man but "bared his soul compulsively to America in a way that undercut his authority as a leader."

Newell sensibly avoids prognostications about America's future, or its likely future leaders. But in a survey of leadership that ranges from Alcibiades to Roosevelt, from Lincoln to Churchill and FDR, he illuminates the most pressing perennial question of democratic governance: How on earth do we get the leader we need? ♦

Lost in Transition

An American drama in post-Maoist China.

BY ABIGAIL LAVIN

On the day of Barack Obama's inauguration, I sit in my neighborhood hair salon in downtown Shanghai, chatting with 25-year-old Xiao Gong as he blow-dries my hair. "Which country do you think your new president will invade first?" he asks earnestly.

Xiao Gong's coworkers, who had been playing cards and slurping spicy noodles at a table in the corner, fall silent. Their eyes rest on me expectantly, waiting for me to shed light on my country's military ambitions. "Canada," I say assuredly.

This causes a small uproar: "Stupid Egg," Xiao Gong calls me affectionately (I assume), "why would Obama invade Canada? My money's on Pakistan or Iran." When I ask Gong which country Hu Jintao will invade, I get the Stupid Egg treatment again: "China would never go to war with another country," says Gong, gesturing wildly with his blow-dryer. "Our economy is strong. You Americans, you start wars because your economy is weak!"

I don't know how to say "arms sales to Sudan" in Chinese, so I decide the best course of action is to pretend I can't hear my interlocutor over the fuzzy drone of the blow-dryer, and bury my head in a book. Twenty minutes later, thoroughly coiffed, I put on my coat and sign a receipt for Xiao Gong's services.

"American girl!" shouts the salon manager, "You're writing with your left hand!" When I tell him that I am aware of this, he tilts his head at me and squints as if contemplating an exorcism. Instead, he hands me a piece of paper and instructs me to practice writing my name with my right hand. When I tell him that I can't write with my right hand, that I have been left-handed all my life, he replies simply, "That's why you need to start practicing. Learn how to write properly," and shoos me out the door.

Undress Me in the Temple of Heaven
by Susan Jane Gilman
Grand Central,
320 pp., $23.99

With daily life so rife with these sorts of confounding incidents, I thought I knew what to expect from Susan Jane Gilman's memoir of backpacking around China as a recent college graduate in 1986: Cultural misunderstandings! Weird food! Bad plumbing! (Interspersed with platitudes about cross-cultural understanding and the virtues of roughing it in youth hostels.)

Indeed, Gilman's third work of nonfiction contains some of these elements, but the extraordinary circumstances of her journey make the story much more than a typical Third World travelogue. When her traveling companion "Claire," a trust-fund baby and fellow Brown graduate, begins to unravel mentally, *Undress Me in the Temple of Heaven* becomes a thrilling story that happens to be set in China, rather than a story about China.

Convinced that the CIA, the FBI, and Mossad are out to get her, Claire displays increasingly erratic behavior. Subsisting on orange soda and steamed rice for six weeks could drive anyone crazy, but this account suggests that her fits of paranoia are brought on by anti-malaria pills, which have been proven to cause hallucinations. Claire's delusions mingle with reality: The two backpackers actually *do* seem to be under surveillance from Chinese authorities, with military police and "friends from the Foreign Affairs Department" appearing at odd moments.

Abigail Lavin is a writer in Shanghai.

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At the time of Gilman's visit, China had only recently opened up to independent travelers from abroad. Foreign visitors were kept on a tight leash and even required to use a different currency from Chinese citizens, which dictated the types of hotels and shops they could patronize. Gilman finds that Beijing has only three hotels that accept Western guests.

Twenty-odd years later, visitors to Beijing have more than 500 options, from the Ritz-Carlton to Howard Johnson. It is astonishing to compare Gilman's descriptions of the country in 1986 to present-day China. "Part of what made Beijing appear so gray and industrial," she reports, "was its total lack of commercialism—no billboards, neon signs, gaudy advertisements." Today, a visitor to Beijing would be hard-pressed to make it through a single afternoon without encountering a Kentucky Fried Chicken or Starbucks.

Twenty-one years before Paris Hilton's judgment—"Shanghai looks like the future!"—Gilman describes it as "a formerly splendid metropolis now moldering in dust and neglect." While the nightclubs of present-day Shanghai stay open until sunrise, Gilman found that Shanghai by night in 1986 "was almost a blackout."

Yet, amidst the stupefying rapidity of China's evolution since Gilman's adventures, a certain species endures: the self-righteous backpacker, intent on adopting a lifestyle of Third World-style deprivation in order to assuage his/her privileged guilt. Anyone who has traveled abroad knows these people: They brag about how little they miss flat-screen televisions, central heating, 7-11s, and bathing. Gilman gives these creatures a refreshing upbraiding, noting that the Chinese people whose lives are so sentimentalized by Western tourists don't "live famished, agrarian lives due to some sort of Eastern spirituality or enlightenment. Give most of the world's population our money and opportunity, and they weren't going slumming at all. They were booking a Club Med vacation in Cancún and drinking a mai tai."

There are many places to find fault with *Undress Me in the Temple of Heaven*. The dialogue feels overly expository and contrived. The main characters address each other as "Sweetie" far too often. The title and the cover—a photograph of a naked woman obscured by a rucksack—seem manipulative, suggesting far more lasciviousness than is actually contained in the book. But the crux of the action—Claire's mental breakdown and the harrowing task of getting her home in one piece—makes for a thrilling read. ♦

Remains of the Day

A post-mortem on the 'great five-hundred year Humanist experiment.' **BY CHRISTOPHER BENSON**

John Carroll belongs to that now common guild of writers—the Intellectual Undertaker.

The Undertaker has an overdeveloped olfactory organ, acutely sensitive to the putrid smells in our culture. His writing announces The Death of "fill in the blank": Satan, Protestant America, character, tragedy, adulthood), and the urgent business of burial means there is no time for maudlin theatrics and interminable nuance. Solemn readers gather round the gravesite of his work; they watch the ritual with memories of what is past and curiosity about what is ahead.

The Wreck of Western Culture
Humanism Revisited
by John Carroll
ISI, 275 pp., $28

The Wreck of Western Culture ends with these words:

> Our story is told. Its purpose has been simple, to shout that humanism is dead, and has been so since the nineteenth century. It is time to quit it. Let us bury it with appropriate rites, which means honoring what was good, and understanding what went wrong and why. We do not want to fall for its charms a second time.

Why has the corpse of humanism remained unburied for so long?

> Its rallying illusion is bred deeply into us by now—that knowledge will make us better and happier, and that we are free, free to improve ourselves.

Christopher Benson is a teacher and writer living in Denver.

Carroll, professor of sociology at La Trobe University in Melbourne, distinguishes himself among undertakers. He is a kind of performance artist who favors a hauntingly imaginative, improvisational style of expression, liberated from cumbersome footnotes and academic obscurantism. A rotten corpse has left him playfully ironic but also deadly serious. His book—the burial rite of "the great five-hundred year Humanist experiment to found an entirely secular culture on earth"—features pugnacious prose, expository skillfulness, transgressive wisdom, and mental verve.

Over a century ago Nietzsche discerned that "we belong to a time in which culture is in danger of being destroyed by the means of culture." Carroll picks up where Nietzsche left off, praising humanism for succeeding "brilliantly at the material level" and "partly in the moral sphere," but censuring it because the "cultural consequences were ruinous." Why did culture become a danger to itself? Here, Carroll parts company with Nietzsche. His thesis, more likely from a theologian than a sociologist, runs against the grain:

> Humanism sought to turn the treasure-laden galleon of Western culture around. It attempted to replace God by man, put humans at the center of the universe—to deify them. Its ambition was to found an order on

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earth in which freedom and happiness prevailed, without any transcendental or supernatural supports—an entirely human order.

The Wreck of Western Culture is a four-part drama: Foundation, Middle Acts, Fall, and Death Throes. If you relish the masterpieces of the modern West because they reveal "the deepest truths of their time," then you will welcome this study because Carroll unapologetically "seeks the best, and neglects the rest."

The foundation of humanism is the Renaissance, and its hero Shakespeare's Brutus. According to Carroll, he marks a dramatic shift from the ideal of piety to the ideal of honor, from the saint to the gentleman, from derived authority to autonomous authority. Regicide is coronation. By killing one sovereign (Caesar) he enthrones another (reason and free will). Before the death of Jesus, Pilate declared: "Behold the man!" After the death of Brutus, Mark Antony eulogized: "This was a man!" Brutus, then, is not an anti-Christ so much as a surrogate Christ, obeying his own higher law.

Does this gentleman-hero possess enough gravity to stand on his feet? Through incisive analysis of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, Carroll concludes: "Without God, without a transcendental law, there is only death." In both the play and the painting, he notices how the sinister entrance of the skull terrifies the hero, flattening his intellectual aspirations and stealing his volitional power.

The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb, another painting by Holbein, plots "humanism's first step, to destroy the authority of Christianity." Depicting Christ as a dead man rather than a resurrected Savior, "Holbein hit the central nerve of humanist thought, and with it every member of the modern West. No one can escape the elongated, bony middle finger of Holbein's Christ as it collapses downwards onto the stone slab—the new world is empty of authority. Mortality rules." To stave off this "death worship," Cervantes introduces Don Quixote, a heroic knight whose action is possible only through "a sizeable dose of unreal fantasy."

The Protestant Reformation chastens the humanist heroes. Against the intrepid knight, Luther argues that "free choice is a pure fiction." No man controls his destiny because God determines his comings and goings, similar to "the metaphysics of Greek tragedy." Luther's doctrine of *sola fide* is multi-pronged, designed to impale the "nihilistic humanism" of Holbein and Hamlet, the so-called Christian humanism of Erasmus, and the Roman Catholic doctrine of works. Against the grandeur of the gentleman, Calvin offers "a vision of the littleness of the human, in contrast with the harsh magnificence of God." The pilgrim emerges as a "counterideal to that of the Renaissance." What characterizes him is "the darkness of faith where neither law nor reason shines," the fearlessness of death because, to use Luther's expression, "death killeth death"—the crucified Christ overcomes "the thrall of the skull."

'The Ambassadors,' by Hans Holbein the Younger

THE LONDON NATIONAL GALLERY

If the Protestant Reformation was a "demolition from the north," the Alternative Reformation was a demolition from the middle, specifically France. Carroll focuses on the painter Poussin. Along with three Italian predecessors—Donatello, Raphael, and Caravaggio—Poussin extracts the best of Protestantism to assault Catholicism, notably the doctrine of *potestas clavium* (the power of keys) which "put into the hands of the Church and its priesthood total control over salvation." Carroll describes Poussin's paintings as visual representations of *sola fide*. For instance, *The Plague of Ashdod* presents an allegory of a chaotic, diseased town whose only hope of renewal is from an outsider—a young boy who bears the gift of order and grace. If the town is the Church of Rome, the boy is the Alternative Reformation, breathing new life into the archetypal story of Jesus.

Part two addresses the middle acts of the story, which begins with two artists who explore "the immediate post-Reformation trials of humanism." For the secular trial, there is Velásquez and his painting *Las Meninas*, "the first direct representation in Western culture of the artist as a great man, the free, world-conquering individual." Here the artist is equal to God and king, advancing the Protagorean boast, "Man is the measure of all things." For the religious trial, there is Rembrandt and his painting *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, a test that determines whether the principle of *sola fide* is absurd. Here "Luther's darkness of faith is too intimidating and even the greatest of men, the father of faith, could not bear up."

After these trials, a "bourgeois fusion" emerges, "an attempt to integrate the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation by forming a composite-character ideal of gentleman and Puritan." Vermeer and Bach herald this bourgeois

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fusion: Vermeer with his paintings that depict the "home as sanctuary" and Bach with his music that wrestles "bourgeois consciousness away from the profanely worldly, and onto the journey of the suffering, but immortal soul." Carroll regards this period as "the most stable and enduring of the humanist offspring," with its major contributions to education and parliamentary democracy. But alas, the flower fades.

Humanism was "a parasitic form" from its inception, Carroll astutely observes, feeding off the strengths of Catholic, aristocratic, and Protestant cultures.

> As the bourgeois fusion itself began to disintegrate there was one last attempt to revive humanism, by two polarized schools. One, the Enlightenment, reverted to a narrow, hard-core humanism stipulated on a deified reason; the other, Romanticism, stakes its individualism on trying to invest passion with sacred status.

Descartes, the architect of the Enlightenment, built a "palace of reason," but its basement of "clear and distinct" truths was haunted by the specter of doubt, leaving religion and morality spooked. The gift of rationalism was science; the curse was "the childlike utopianism that spawned the French Revolution." To Descartes's "I think, therefore I am," Rousseau delivered his own riposte: "I feel, therefore I am."

With his backstage pass, Carroll takes the reader behind the scenes to see that

> The eighteenth century was directed by the problem caused by the loss of faith. It was the decline of Christianity that led to the schism between reason and romance. . . . The schism remained, and in the nineteenth century, when reason was not prospering in natural science it began to inflict its own curse, the rationalization of the world, just as Romanticism turned increasingly toward the skull, and became nihilistic.

Kant's rationalist ethics was the last best hope for humanism to stand on its own feet. To his credit, Kant furnished the moral basis for liberal democracy and universal human rights—the greatest achievement of humanism. But for all its promise of being a "religion of humanity," Carroll argues: "The brilliance of Kantian ethics suffers from a superficiality, its failure to take account of the power of the demonic in human nature, the weak, subsidiary, and circumscribed role of reason, and above all that, as Luther thundered, faith is only to be encountered in the dark, where the individual is in chains, without freedom."

Part three chronicles the fall of humanism, as rancor and chaos weakened cultural authority. Rancor was directed toward God and the church while chaos presented two faces, akin to the ancient Greek masks of tragedy and comedy: one face nihilism and the other liberalism. Carroll delineates three stages of the fall. The first stage is a mockery of old cultures. Marx insisted that "the world was determined by economics and the iron logic of History" whereas Darwin posited that nature ruled through natural selection. One casualty is the human, reduced to "the skull disguised as the great ape," and the other is religion, "only the illusory sun, around which man revolves, until he begins to revolve around himself."

The second stage is "dynamic nihilism," a fight back. Meditating on the figure of Abraham, Kierkegaard wrestles with "the core Protestant contradiction—that I have no free will, but am responsible." Carroll contrasts two treatments of Abraham: "While Rembrandt's doubt was that humans are not up to the divine call—the stuff out of which they are made is too poor a quality—Kierkegaard's is that they no longer hear the call. They are lost in inwardness; trapped in subjectivity." Abraham experiences the leap of faith, but the modern knight of faith cannot depend on such a miracle; he is subject to crippling doubt, guilt, and paradox.

Like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche pronounces modernity a failure: "Either there are the uncontrolled Dionysian excesses of Romanticism, gushing feeling without any ordering principle; or the banal pedantry of rationalism—the dry scholar, the dull priest, the painstaking bureaucrat—eyes closed to the demonic." Unlike Kierkegaard, Nietzsche does not lean on the Christian faith because it represents the last surviving "redemptive illusion." Man overcomes nihilism through tragic sensibility, greatness of character, or invented values. None of these solutions is adequate for the fight, so "Nietzsche launches his last value, *amor fati*—to love fate."

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were experimental pharmacologists. With Kierkegaard, the Reformation was on Prozac. With Nietzsche, the Renaissance was on Viagra. Neither medication stopped the encroachment of nihilism, so the third stage in the fall of humanism is resignation. Freud invites modern man to recline on his sofa, where "the last glorification of the humanist *I* is psychobiography, pieced together from dreams, the only story left that has meaning, kept safe and intact in the unconscious."

Part four marks the death throes of humanism, final attempts in the 20th century "to build anew within the wreckage," to give "metaphysical weight" to the weightless world, whether in the novels of Henry James or the films of John Ford. The last chapter delivers an account of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, when Osama bin Laden smashed against the West like a metaphysical wrecking ball, destroying its Twin Towers of humanist will and reason. Now we are, quite literally, at Ground Zero.

Some of the finest books are ambitious to the point of hubris, synoptic to the point of oversimplification, and courageous to the point of rashness. *The Wreck of Western Culture* risks the flaws to achieve the merits as it traces five centuries of Western humanism, beginning with the Renaissance credo "I am everything," transitioning to the Reformation credo "I am nothing," and ending with the nihilist credo "I am against everything." The Undertaker has written a memorable requiem, but he hints, much like Pope John Paul II, at what exists beyond the gravesite of false humanisms: a return to the "I am" of Jesus. If Jesus is God's supreme man, then true humanism is possible through an imitation of him. ♦

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Hankering for Tom

Forget sainthood. How about some laughs for a change?

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

On the May 16 edition of *Saturday Night Live*, Tom Hanks made a cameo appearance playing a very stupid version of Tom Hanks. At one point, the camera catches Stupid Tom Hanks as he gets himself trapped inside a dry-cleaning bag and tries desperately to extricate himself. It was the funniest 15 seconds of television I've seen in years, and it instantly brought back memories of the brilliant physical comedy in which Hanks specialized in the early years of his career—clomping around as the world's least believable woman in drag on the television series *Bosom Buddies*, being subdued by a Laotian dominatrix (don't ask) in the unjustly neglected farce *Volunteers*, playing "Chopsticks" with his feet in *Big*, and, best of all, exploding into a hysterical laughing jag of torment and despair in the wake of yet another renovation disaster in *The Money Pit*.

His unbeatable physical timing was matched by his facility for quick talk, sudden explosions of petulant temper, and dizzy silliness. He was the finest comic actor of the day, and judging from his bit on *SNL*, probably still is. But then something happened; he became James Stewart and Gary Cooper and William Holden all rolled into one, a paradigm of American decency and goodness, our best representation of ourselves. His emergence as a pop-culture saint, sonorously celebrating the space program and the Greatest Generation and John Adams, seemed until that surprising Saturday night to have knocked the funny out of him.

Now he is appearing on one million movie screens in *Angels and Demons*, the sequel to *The DaVinci Code*, yet again essaying the role of a Harvard "symbologist" on the trail of a terrible conspiracy that could shake the very core of our civilization to its foundations! Watching it, I felt as if I were in a dry-cleaning bag from which I could not escape. People are saying *Angels and Demons* is a better movie than *The DaVinci Code*, which was, admittedly, terrible. But I can't imagine why anyone could actually think *Angels and Demons* was an improvement over anything save, perhaps, staring at a brick wall for two hours.

Angels and Demons
Directed by Ron Howard

Has any major motion picture in memory had a plot with more holes in it? The entire conspiracy is uncovered through, yes, a tape recording on a hidden camera. (I think I saw that on *Mannix* back in 1969.) The assassin who kills off most of the victims in the course of the movie is himself blown up in a car—only it's never explained who placed the bomb to blow him up, or who set up the elaborate computer-payoff system we see compensating the bad guy throughout the movie. Somebody's eyeball is torn out so that it can be used to open a door locked by a retinal scanner, but there's no clue as to how the eyeball-ripper-outer got into the highly secure facility in the first place.

And then there's Hanks. It's hard to think of a duller performance given in the annals of American cinema by a major film actor at the top of his game than the turn he delivers in *Angels and Demons*. It's not entirely his fault; there is no character for him to play. At the beginning, he is swimming. At the end, he says hi to the pope. In between—the movie takes place over 18 hours, and feels twice as long—Hanks spends much of his time trying (I am not kidding) to go to the library.

When he is not casing the stacks, Hanks is little more than *Angels and Demons*'s Basil Exposition—the name Mike Myers gave to the character in *Austin Powers* who is on hand to explain the plot. Hanks delivers mind-numbing information about a secret society called the Illuminati, some Vatican history, a little detail on the faith vs. science struggles, and a new explanation of the complexities of the infield-fly rule. Okay, fine, there's nothing about the infield-fly rule, I made that up, but it would have been equally interesting had there been a monologue on the subject rather than on Bernini's views of the papal hierarchy.

At least in *The DaVinci Code*, Hanks had a bizarre haircut that suggested his character was maybe a little weird. Here his hair is normal, and nothing else is different, and it seems plausible that he might have substituted an animatronic robot for himself in many of the scenes. I understand that he is likely to receive compensation on the order of $75 million for playing the part. Surely he could have done something. Raise an eyebrow. Cough. Sneeze. *Something*.

Hanks needs to get himself into a comedy, and soon. And not one by the Coen brothers, who directed him in the only comedy he's made this decade, the overdeliberate and overdone *The Ladykillers*. He's got to get his legs going crazy, his eyes darting about, his lips into overdrive, and his maniacal laugh on the tip of his tongue. Someone must save him from the slough of despond into which he has plunged himself.

Paging Stupid Tom Hanks. Get out the dry-cleaning bag, and stat. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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AP PHOTO / RON EDMONDS

The White House, May 13. From left, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Rep. Charlie Rangel, Rep. George Miller, Vice President Joe Biden, President Barack Obama, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer.

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